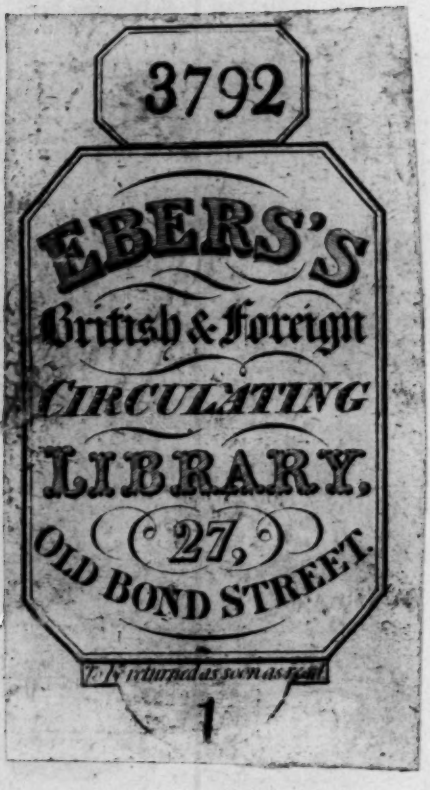
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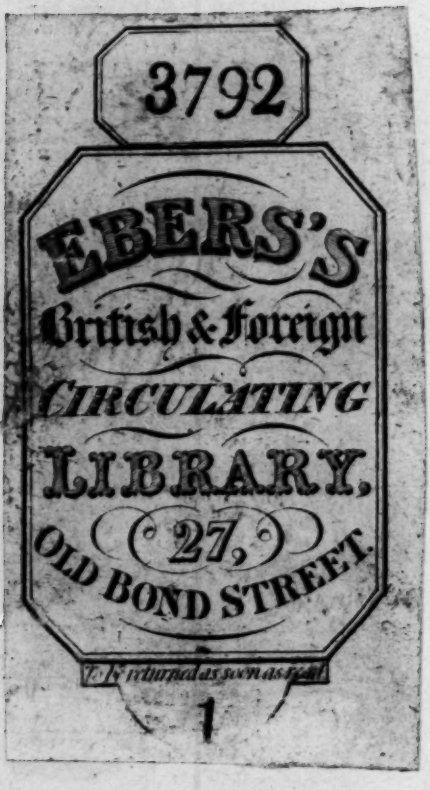
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THE

RIVAL MOTHERS,

OR

CALUMNY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

MADAME DE GENLIS.

Virtue and Patience have at length unravell'd
The knots which Fortune tied.

DRYDEN.

Depuis que je suis né, j'ai vu la calomnie
Exhaler les venins de sa bouche impunie.

VOLTAIRE's *Tancrède.*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed by A. Strahan, Printers-Street, for

T. N. LONGMAN AND O. REES, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1800.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the following ſheets, we preſent to the public a tranſlation of *Les Mères Rivales*, a novel from the pen of Madame de Genlis. Were not this lady's reputation already ſo well eſtabliſhed in that ſpecies of writing, it would be ſuperfluous for us to expatiate on her abilities, after the appearance of this her laſt production.

Having ſaid this much of the original, may we, without incurring the charge of preſumption, venture to expreſs a hope that it will not be found disfigured in its

Engliſh dreſs? Fidelity being the firſt requiſite in tranſlation, it has been principally our aim to give the ſenſe of the authoreſs, without forcing it, in any way, for the ſake of embelliſhment; and, in adhering to the *letter* of her ſtyle, as cloſely as the genius of the two languages will allow, we have endeavoured not to loſe ſight of its *ſpirit*.

As works of this deſcription generally paſs into the hands of youth of both ſexes, we have taken the liberty to ſcatter a few notes; and we beg leave to obſerve, that theſe notes being introduced chiefly with a view to *their* entertainment, we have frequently conveyed our meaning in the words of thoſe authors who have expreſſed the ſame ideas in *verſe*, in order that our youthful readers might, by that means, find them inſtructive as well as entertaining.

"*Omne tulit punctum, qui miſcuit utile dulci* *."

ſays HORACE; and, ſince it cannot be denied that poetry improves the taſte no leſs than hiſtory enlarges the underſtanding, we truſt that, under this idea, we ſhall not appear to have availed ourſelves of a tranſlator's privilege in a partial or unbecoming manner.

* All voices in that writer's praiſe unite,
Who, while he gives inſtruction, gives delight.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO

MADAME BOCQUET, née JORDAN.

My dear friend,

In the heroine of the following work, I have endeavoured to describe the most affectionate daughter, and the most perfect sister, wife, mother, and female friend: to lay at your feet such a portrait is to offer you your own; but it is worthy of being presented to you only on account of the resemblance.

Equally alive to feeling, equally virtuous as Pauline, and both more prudent and more fortunate, you have had the happineſs never to feel the attacks of calumny; your reputation, like your mind and your life, was always unſullied.

In theſe letters, you will diſcover an infinite number of incidents which relate to yourſelf; ſentiment and gratitude have collected them for the purpoſe of embelliſhing this work. How pleaſing it is, in painting the moſt faithful friendſhip, to find its model in our friend! How much is the happineſs of recollecting ſuch a circumſtance preferable

able to the fame ariſing from invention!

Do you receive then this feeble tribute of an affection as warm as it is ſincere; you, who join to youth all the ſolidity of the moſt mature age; you, whom I can love with ſafety; you, the generous friend beſtowed on me by Misfortune! Ah! believe me, the higheſt gratification that this work can procure me, is to afford a few agreeable moments to her, who, for theſe two years, has laviſhed on me attentions ſo endearing; and whoſe invariable and affecting friendſhip has yielded me ſo many conſolations

in my troubles, and so many charms in the deep retirement to which I have devoted myself.

PREFACE.

I CERTAINLY had the unhappy right to compoſe a work *on Calumny*; and I could not but pourtray with truth the inconſiſtency, the abſurdity, the atrociouſneſs, and the malicious perſeverance of *calumniators*. I neither had occaſion for underſtanding nor genius to draw this frightful picture; it required no more than memory.

We ought to forget the malicious, but it is uſeful, when we write, to recall

to mind malice, in order to unveil its dangerous artifices. Thus, in delineating in this work all the vile ſtratagems employed by hatred and envy, I meant not to deſignate any individual; I have drawn a general picture, and not particular portraits. If we reſpect ourſelves, we ſhall never deviate from ſuch moderation; but I own that, in me, this is far from being meritorious. The authors, my enemies, (the only ones that I can know with certainty,) are ſo generally deſpiſed that, not only are *they undeſerving of the honour of being mentioned*; but they even merit not that of being alluded to. Beſides, who would know them? Whatever effrontery and malice we

may

may poſſeſs, we do not become *celebrated*, when we write ſtupidly and abſurdly. And, indeed, far from having had an intention of repreſenting the libellers who have written againſt me, I have endeavoured that the perſonages to whom I have given the dark ſhades of their characters, ſhould not appear totally deſtitute of underſtanding; could I take a better method of diſpelling every idea of alluſion?

In this work, I meant to paint *conjugal love* the moſt exalted and the moſt refined; and I meant that it ſhould bear no reſemblance to love. Of this ſentiment, and of maternal and filial affection, I have formed all the

the intereſting part of theſe letters. Here are a great many bold and new incidents for a novel: an idea ſtill more new is, to have ventured to put on a footing with perfect virtue, united to innocence, virtue ſullied by a moment of weakneſs, and purified by every thing affecting and heroic that repentance can afford. If I have ſucceeded in cauſing ſpotleſs virtue to be preferred, I will venture to ſay, that I have drawn the picture the moſt worthy of exerciſing the pencil of a real moraliſt.

It is admitted that, *dramatically*, repentance is more intereſting than innocence, that *expiation* is more affecting than perſeverance, that the

virtue

virtue which has gone aſtray in an excuſable manner, and which riſes again with luſtre, has ſomething more ſublime than unſhaken virtue. Theſe ideas, however, are falſe and dangerous; nothing can be ſo noble as that virtue which has never deviated from rectitude: this is what I wiſhed to demonſtrate; and what I have proved, if I have rendered Pauline more intereſting than her rival.

It will, perhaps, be ſaid that I have inſerted in this work two or three letters of too ſerious a caſt; but it has not been found that the diſſertations on ſuicide were miſplaced in the *Nouvelle Héloïſe*. In ſhort, I give to my works the title and the form of *novels*, only

only becauſe morality, dryly divided into chapters and *ſections*, appears to me tireſome; and becauſe I think that it is well worth the trouble to endeavour to embelliſh it, as much as poſſible, by every thing ſtriking and agreeable that the imagination can furniſh. I dare believe that my novels are *treatiſes on morality*; therefore I promiſe myſelf that my readers will have the goodneſs to excuſe them for not being quite ſo frivolous as a number of others *.

* I flatter myſelf that in a work *on Calumny*, it will not be conſidered ill-timed if I refute a *calumnious* report which could not but give me much concern. The Duke d'Orléans, the eldeſt of the Princes, my pupils, has formally diſavowed the ſhameful article of a gazette, in which, for a long time paſt, ſo many abſurd falſehoods have appeared againſt me. An Engliſh newſpaper, entitled *The Morning*

Morning Herald, contains this diſavowal, which the Duke d'Orléans has repeated in ſeveral letters addreſſed to different perſons who are at Hamburgh. I ſhall add that I took not the ſmalleſt ſtep to obtain this diſavowal, of which I was particularly deſirous, for the honour of him to whom I devoted *gratuitouſly* ten years of the moſt aſſiduous attentions. It may be ſeen by my *Journal d'une Gouvernante*, written and printed in France in 1790, under the eyes of the family of my pupils, that not only did I not mix *political opinions* with my leſſons; but that I highly diſapproved of ſeveral popular ſteps preſcribed by their unfortunate father; among others, that of cauſing the Duke de Chartres to be introduced into the *Jacobin Club*. Indeed, I had no ſort of ſhare in the political conduct of the eldeſt of my pupils; I never ſpoke to him of public affairs, but in order to endeavour to moderate the exaggeration of his ideas on the ſubject: and of this, the Princes, his brothers, were witneſſes. The Duke de Montpenſier had quite a different manner of thinking; I aſked him, at Tournay, in 1792, to give me his word that he would never ſet his foot in the Jacobin club; he gave it me; he ſoon went to Paris; and, notwithſtanding the orders and the authority of a father whom he loved, notwithſtanding the danger of then fulfilling ſuch an engagement, he was faithful to it; to be ſo, it required an aſtoniſhing firmneſs at the age of which he was at that period. In ſhort, when royalty was aboliſhed in

France,

France, I was in England, and had no more ſhare in the part which the eldeſt of my pupils then took, than I had in his connexion with Monſieur Dumouriez. Had he conſulted me reſpecting thoſe two things and many others, I ſhould, moſt aſſuredly, have made every effort in my power to diſſuade him from them. But even had I *adviſed* the whole conduct of the eldeſt of my pupils, he would ſtill, by ſaying what is falſely attributed to him, have been guilty of a meanneſs equally abſurd and diſgraceful, ſince to him it was abſolutely uſeleſs. Therefore, it is particularly for the intereſt of his reputation that I applaud the diſavowal which juſtifies him; as for me, I was juſtified beforehand, by ſeveral letters from him which I have preſerved, and which he wrote to me during my ſtay in England, by my *Journal d'Education*, by my *Précis de Conduite*, and by the teſtimony which would not have been refuſed me by ſeveral perſons now living; who, certainly, if I had ſtood in need of it, would have paid this homage to truth; and, among this number, I reckon the Duke de Montpenſier and the Count de Beaujolois. Although the latter was but eleven years old when I quitted him, he was too forward for his age not to recollect perfectly well how odious to *me* was the democracy which its partiſans were inſtilling into the Duke de Chartres, and what an intereſt I took in the preſervation of monarchy! In my *Précis de Conduite*, I have not diſſembled that the abolition of royalty afflicted me deeply; but this

regret

regret leſſens not the ſubmiſſion which I think I owe to the eſtabliſhed government. I neither have the talents, the knowledge, nor the information that can cauſe a political ſyſtem to be adopted in a reaſonable manner: on public affairs, I have never had any other than *ſentiments*, and not *opinions*; and as ſentiments proceed from the mind, and are connected with morality, in whatever ſituation I may be, I ſhall never conceal mine.

THE

THE

RIVAL MOTHERS.

LETTER I.

MONSIEUR DU RESNEL *to the* VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN.

Gilly, April 10, 17**.

I RECEIVED your letter, my friend, with the ſenſibility of a friendſhip which commenced in infancy, and which every thing has contributed to ſtrengthen ſince that intereſting period.

At length, you are returned! What happineſs, after a long journey in a foreign country, to ſee again our relations and our friends! What pleaſure merely to tread on our natal ſoil, to meet with the cuſtoms

which we have always followed, and to hear our mother tongue ſpoken in the ſtreets!....

I hope that henceforth there will be no more interruptions in our correſpondence. If you have not heard from me for five or ſix months, it is not my fault; I have written to you four letters: I addreſſed two of theſe to Peterſburg; I ſent the others to Monſieur D***, but I have juſt learned that he is himſelf travelling, that he is in London, and that he will not return theſe ſix weeks.

No, my friend, I will not quit the humble farm of Gilly for the proud caſtle of B***. Independently of my preferring Burgundy to Normandy, I prefer ſimplicity to magnificence.

My deceaſed father (like all *upſtarts*) ſet a great value on the ſort of conſequence which ſhow always gives to people worth a *plum*; luxury, it is true, fixes every eye; men are always flattered at attracting

tracting the attention of the multitude; ſelf-love is ſo eaſily perſuaded then, that to *be looked at and to be admired* are two things ſynonimous!

My father had a thouſand good qualities; he was humane, and beneficent; but his kindneſs and liberality procured him more encomiums than they inſpired gratitude: he was ſurrounded by flatterers and paraſites; courtiers came in crowds to ſup with him; ſeveral of them gave him a *proof of confidence* by borrowing money of him, and he thought he had friends! It is only by dint of modeſty that *citizens*, favourites of fortune, can eſcape envy, and even ridicule; the common people conſent to be *beſpattered* by none but great lords; and theſe laſt chooſe to be ſurpaſſed in oſtentation by none but their equals.

Beſides, if you had ſeen my charming habitation, you would admit that it is by no means neceſſary to be a *ſtoic philoſopher* to be contented with it, and that it

might very well pleaſe an epicurean. The houſe is neither ſhowy nor regularly built; but it is large, convenient, and ſtands in a moſt charming ſituation. I have been able to place in it my collection of natural hiſtory, with what pictures I have preſerved; and I have, beſides, four large apartments at my diſpoſal. My garden is neither in the *Engliſh* nor in the French ſtyle; it partakes of both: here are to be ſeen none of thoſe little mountains without majeſty which ſerve only to render walking a fatigue; here are to be met with none of thoſe *empty* monuments, and thoſe ruins *quite new* which retrace no remembrance; but there are to be found in it lofty ſhade, excellent fruit, and the moſt beautiful flowers in Burgundy.

Although I have been but eight months in this province, I have already formed here connexions ſufficiently intimate to attach me to it. Gilly is ſituated between the fineſt eſtates in this diſtrict, thoſe of Vordac

Vordac and Erneville. I am twelve miles from both.

The Baron de Vordac is a witty old man and a miſanthrope, married five years ago to his third wife, a young woman of two and twenty. His miſanthropy is excuſable; he ſpent his youth at court. His firſt two wives were extremely gallant; their extravagance and the favours of the court forced him to quit the ſervice, and retire to his eſtate. After having been a courtier, a favourite among the women, and an injured huſband; having gathered no other fruit from the favours of princes and beauties than a penſion ill paid, a great many debts and the gout, he fancies himſelf *a ſage*, becauſe he takes his diſcontent for a noble averſion to human greatneſs, and his fretful humour for philoſophy. His wife is amiable and virtuous.

The Marquis d'Erneville is a young man of ſix and twenty, highly diſtinguiſhed in every reſpect; he has a place in the

parliament of Dijon, but he lives on his eſtate. He is fixed there by the ſweeteſt of all ties, conjugal affection.

His hiſtory is romantic and very ſingular. He was adopted, and entirely brought up by the Dowager Counteſs d'Erneville, who two years ago married him to her only daughter, a rich heireſs, and the moſt lovely woman I ever ſaw. The Counteſs gave this couple the fine eſtate of Erneville, on condition that her ſon-in-law ſhould quit the name of d'Orgeval, in order to take that of d'Erneville. The Counteſs was much blamed for having given her daughter, the richeſt match in the province, and of a very illuſtrious family, to a man who had neither fortune nor birth. The d'Orgevals are of a lawyer's family, very recently ennobled. For my part I applaud this excellent mother, who, though ſhe had it in her power to marry her daughter to a great lord, rejected all the frivolous projects of ambition and vanity,

in

in order to conſult only the happineſs of this beloved girl, who was ſo deſerving of her affection.

It is ſaid that one of the circumſtances which determined her, is the certainty that this marriage will for ever fix her daughter in the country, and that ſhe will be always ſheltered from the inevitable dangers to which a young woman, who joins to beauty the moſt ſeducing graces and enchanting talents, is expoſed at court, and in the great world.

The Counteſs is the more commendable, as ſhe was directed by no view of perſonal intereſt, not even by the deſire of not being ſeparated from her daughter; for, although ſhe is equally dear to each of the young couple, ſhe does not live with them; ſhe has retired to a convent in Dijon, and has there devoted herſelf for ever to the moſt profound retirement. Heaven has hitherto juſtified her views, and bleſſed her work. Nothing equals the happineſs

of the two intereſting beings whoſe union ſhe has completed; their family forms the moſt delightful picture that can be contemplated, and, not to be charmed with it, a perſon muſt have all the moroſeneſs of the Baron de Vordac.

You will think, perhaps, that I am very generous to admire, without a mixture of chagrin and envy, ſuch a pattern of felicity; but I am ſo perfectly cured, that the remembrance even of my illuſions no longer preſents to me the image of happineſs. I recollect only that I was completely the dupe of the moſt profound hypocriſy, and I have forgotten my pleaſures, my troubles, and my misfortunes. The moſt juſt contempt has totally effaced from my heart the trace of my former ſentiments. Beſides, nothing can remind me of them in company with Monſieur and Madame d'Erneville. It is not a *burning paſſion* that they have for each other; they have loved one another from

their

their infancy; the ſame education, the ſame principles, the ſame affections have formed between them a conformity of taſtes, opinions, and ſentiments, whence reſults an attachment which is not love, but which is a thouſand times more tender, and more ſolid. Sweet habit, in diveſting their mutual affection of all the characteriſtics of paſſion, has linked them for ever in an indiſſoluble chain. It would be impoſſible for them to diſpenſe with each other; they are two ſouls that could not be diſunited without being torn! . . . . They both have, in an eminent degree, genius, and very great characters; the Marchioneſs, ſix or ſeven years younger than her huſband, is only ſeventeen; with the moſt brilliant, the beſt cultivated underſtanding, and an exquiſite ſenſibility, ſhe has a modeſty and ingenuouſneſs truly remarkable; a ſingular mixture of education, fineſſe and innocence, reaſon and childiſh giddineſs give her a certain ſome-

thing attractive and intereſting that I never ſaw but in her..... Theſe two happy creatures have a charming child, which the mother ſuckled, and which ſhe has juſt weaned. An important affair has compelled the Marquis to make a journey to Paris. He ſet out about ſix weeks ago; he is to come back in a fortnight, and ſurely will not defer his return. He has not taken his wife with him, ſhe remains at Erneville.

In order to completely anſwer all your queſtions reſpecting my *neighbourhood*, I muſt alſo name to you ſome other perſons with whom I am not ſo intimate as with thoſe I have juſt mentioned. Monſieur d'Orgeval, a younger brother to Monſieur d'Erneville, a young man of five and twenty, married within theſe two months to Mademoiſelle Dupui, niece of the banker of that name whom you know. This d'Orgeval is very inferior to his brother in every reſpect; his wife is toler-

ably

ably agreeable. They live in old Dupui's houſe, and will ſpend the ſummers in an eſtate which the latter poſſeſſes fifteen miles from Erneville. Laſtly, the Chevalier de Celtas, the *wit* of the province, and the *pattern of faſhion* in the town of Autun. He ſpent ſome years in Paris, where he deranged a very moderate fortune: as he is a man of very good family, and does not want underſtanding nor agreeable qualities, he conceived the hope of marrying Mademoiſelle d'Erneville; he aſked for her hand, he was refuſed; but he betrayed no ill-humour, and has remained the friend of the family. He is particularly intimate with Monſieur d'Orgeval, who is his greateſt admirer. The Chevalier comes pretty often to my houſe. His converſation is amuſing; I think him witty and gay; but he deals in ſarcaſm and ridicule: the diſagreeable expreſſion of irony, invariably fixed on his features, gives his whole countenance ſomething equivo-

cal and deceitful, which repels confidence.

My neighbours come often to dine with me. Although I visit them less frequently, they take no exception at this, because they know my fondness for solitude. Honest Remi, who chose to follow me, and who, I hope, will never quit me, is infinitely less sedentary than I. *His little scraps of poetry* here procure him much success; he has already celebrated the *virtues* and the *graces* of all our *ladies of quality*: it is he who composes *epithalamiums*, and all the *bouquets* for birth-days; his talents have obtained him a very brilliant conquest, that of a heart of five and thirty, *still quite fresh*. Mademoiselle du Rocher, the companion of the Marchioness d'Erneville, has for him all the symptoms of a *great passion*, and I think that he is by no means *insensible* to it. I have perceived their mutual inclination, by the excessive increase of their gaiety

when

when they are together. I have made on this subject a rather singular remark; I have long since observed that among peasants and the common people, and even in the class of persons who had not lived in the great world, or had no idea of what we call good breeding and fashionable life, love never manifests itself but by an augmentation of gaiety and continual playfulness, and the appearance of a lively and extravagant joy; while, on the contrary, among *well-bred* people, love always announces itself by seriousness and even by melancholy. The former treat love as an amusement, and the latter as an important affair. This may lead to the idea that, but for the refinements of genius and manners, and the exaltation of fancy, love would by no means be a violent passion. Par parenthese à propos of *passion*, of love, and above all of *extravagance*,—do you know that Madame du Reinel had the audacity to write to me a fortnight ago, in order to propose

poſe a *reconciliation?* Have you an idea of ſuch impudence? I imagine that this ſtep is a conſequence of the vexation occaſioned her by the embarraſſment of affairs, of debts, the open deſertion of the Duke de Roſmond, and the deranged ſtate of her health. I have not, as you may well ſuppoſe, taken the trouble of anſwering her.

Adieu, my dear Viſcount; write to me about every thing that concerns you, with as much detail as you require from me. Speak to me of your pleaſures, of your projects, of your hopes; and do not forget that you have promiſed me a copy of your journal.

LETTER II.

The ſame to the ſame.

April 16.

WILL you believe, my dear Viſcount, that Madame du Reſnel has, in good earneſt, formed the *virtuous intention* of being *reconciled* to me! ..... Moſt aſſuredly ſhe has quite loſt her ſenſes. She learnt, I know not how, that the Marquis d'Erneville was at Paris, and that I was very intimate with him. She begged him to ſtep to her houſe, and has ſo warmly intereſted him in her favour, that the Marquis has written me four long pages, in order to prove to me that my *philoſophy* ought to make me overlook ſome *ſlights of youth, expiated by a ſincere repentance, and the moſt affecting ſentiments*, &c. As he is abſolutely ignorant of my hiſtory, his letter from one end to the other

other is laughably ridiculous. His wife, to whom he has written on this very subject, sent for me too, in order to talk to me on it. I answered her, that my respect for her prevented me from detailing my causes of complaint against Madame du Resnel; that it was impossible to tell her such a story; but that I would inform the Marquis, and that I was sure that he would then consider the present hopes of Madame du Resnel as an absurd piece of effrontery. In fact, I wrote to the Marquis, and I briefly, but correctly, stated to him, the *flights of youth* of this woman whom he finds so interesting. Inquire, I beg of you, whether she is still as handsome as ever. She is but seven and twenty. When a person does not know her, she is so seducing! The Marquis is young and unexperienced, he has warm passions!.... Great God, if the artifices of this worthless woman!..... Ah! could he for a moment forget that angel whom he has left

left here, who thinks of him alone, who expects him, who reckons the days and the hours! . . . . . . I aſſure you that this idea torments me exceedingly.

In ſhort the Marquis ſhall know Madame du Reſnel. I will conceal nothing from him, but ſtill make ſome inquiries concerning her. You may eaſily do ſo through C*** who ſees her often. I hope that ſhe is grown ugly ſince her health is become ſo bad. But were ſhe in all the ſplendour of that beauty once ſo famous, I ſhould not conceive that the huſband of *Pauline d'Erneville* could be ſeduced by her for a moment.

So then, my friend, you are in the houſehold of a Prince of the blood! It is a ſort of ſlavery. However, unleſs we quit the world, muſt we not always renounce our liberty? When we wiſh to make our way, we have only the choice of chains; it is impoſſible to rid ourſelves of them in any ſituation whatever.

Adieu,

Adieu, my friend, I leave you in order to finiſh the unconſcionable letter which I am writing to the Marquis d'Erneville, and which, notwithſtanding all my diligence, will not be completed before to-morrow.

LETTER III.

The ſame to the MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE.

April 16.

THE inveigling woman for whom you intereſt yourſelf, my dear Marquis, has deceived you in all points. Your error might give me in your eyes the air of injuſtice, or at leaſt that of harſhneſs. Your eſteem is ſo valuable to me, that I am unable to reſiſt the inclination and the want of ſetting you right in this reſpect, which I cannot do without telling you a ſtory very melancholy to me, but which is in itſelf equally ſingular, ſtrange, and pleaſant. I will ſpare you

you an infinite number of details: in confining myſelf, however, to the principal facts, this narrative will ſtill be very long, and I ſhould never have the courage to undertake it, did I not attach ſo warm an intereſt to my juſtification. Read therefore with ſome attention and uninterruptedly, if poſſible, this extraordinary ſtory.

After the death of my father, finding myſelf in poſſeſſion of an immenſe fortune, I thought ſeriouſly of marrying. Different matches were propoſed to me; among others Mademoiſelle de M * * *, an orphan of eighteen years of age, of a great family, beautiful as an angel, but without any fortune. An old aunt had received her under her roof. I was introduced, and my propoſal was accepted.

However, I wiſhed to know whether Mademoiſelle de M * * * would without difficulty marry a financier, and whether I ſuited her perſonally. I had with her

on

on this ſubject a long explanation, which made my happineſs, ſince ſhe repeated to me more than once the aſſurance that the choice of her family perfectly agreed with her own inclination. I married her, and for ſix months I was the happieſt of men. I poſſeſſed the moſt beautiful, as well as the moſt amiable, woman in Paris, and I thought myſelf beloved.

I was obliged to ſee and to receive often my wife's relations, and conſequently ſome courtiers, which formed in my houſe two ſocieties very different, that of Madame du Reſnel and mine. With the exception of the Viſcount de St. Méran, with whom I have been intimate from my infancy, I had for friends none but men of my own profeſſion, or a few men of letters, and two or three artiſts. Madame du Reſnel was extremely polite towards them, that is to ſay, ſhe aſked *how they did* when they came, and at ſupper ſhe offered them of every thing that was on the table. In

other reſpects, the amiable converſations were excluſively reſerved for the ſmall ſelect circle by which ſhe cauſed herſelf to be ſurrounded. My friends, on their ſide, drew up near me, and while we were quietly deſcanting on the arts and literature, Madame du Reſnel and her gueſts were talking about the court, the opera, the new piece, and faſhions. There reigned a great gaiety in this committee, which was much more numerous than mine; and the vivacity, the animated air of theſe perſonages formed a pleaſant contraſt with our uniform tranquillity. For in general thoſe who really know how to converſe, have not all thoſe exaggerated demonſtrations which it has been agreed to term *fire* and *expreſſion*; but the *ſayers of nothings* are like the bad actors, who ſupply the place of talent by mere pantomime.

I had not, in the outſet, been ſorry that Madame du Reſnel had partly taken on herſelf the trouble of entertaining people with

with whom I was little acquainted, and whoſe converſation by no means pleaſed me; but I found that ſhe extended by far too much the ſort of liberty which was left me in this reſpect. I at firſt tried from time to time to render the converſation general; it was in vain: I mixed more than once in this group which was almoſt entirely unknown to me: the perſons who compoſed it eyed me with an air of aſtoniſhment; I felt myſelf quite uncomfortable among them; they ſpoke a language, all the fineſſes of which were loſt on me, for I had not the key either of the alluſions, or of the pleaſantries of their ſociety. At length I had with Madame du Reſnel an explanation, which ſerved only to produce a mutual coolneſs. I learnt, ſome little time after, that her couſin and intimate friend, Madame de P***, older than her by five years, conducted herſelf with the greateſt impropriety; I requeſted the ſacrifice of this connexion. My wife cried

cried; this was refuſing me; I had not the courage to inſiſt, but I became diſtruſtful and unhappy. I went pretty often into the country to the houſe of St. Méran's uncle, who ſpent there the whole winter. One morning I announced that I ſhould go and paſs two days there, and I in fact ſet off after dinner. But in the evening I took it into my head to return ſecretly to Paris, and I executed this intention. I arrived at my houſe at half paſt twelve o'clock; I entered the door of my garden, of which I had a key, having in my confidence only a ſingle ſervant. I went ſoftly up to my apartment by a private ſtair caſe, and I learnt from my footman that Madame du Reſnel was not come in. I undreſſed, and afterwards ſlipping into my wife's room, I lay down on a large four-poſt bedſtead all the curtains of which were cloſely drawn. Madame du Reſnel's maids, according to their cuſtom, were aſleep in their apartments, ſitting up for their miſtreſs. At

two

two o'clock in the morning I heard a thundering knock at the door; a moment after, my wife and her friend Madame de P *** entered the room. Madame du Reſnel ſaid that ſhe would undreſs herſelf alone, and diſmiſſed her waiting-women, at the ſame time ordering them to go to bed. Madame du Reſnel took off her hoop, and diamonds; ſhe then ſat down by the fire-ſide in order to chat quite at her eaſe with her friend. You may well ſuppoſe that I did not ſleep; I loſt not a ſingle word of their converſation, which diſcovered to me in the moſt poſitive manner that Madame du Reſnel had for her lover the brother of her friend, the Baron de ***. Madame du Reſnel repeated ſeveral times during this converſation that ſhe had married me againſt her inclination, and that ſhe had *the frankneſs* to apprize me of the fact: ſhe told her couſin ſeveral other falſehoods; but confidences of this kind are generally full of them. I muſt,

on the one hand, excuſe her wanderings as much as poſſible, and, on the other, I muſt try to make an *intereſting novel.*

I was choking with grief and anger; but I formed the reſolution to contain myſelf in order to reflect coolly, on the courſe that there remained for me to follow.

At four o'clock in the morning the two friends ſeparated. Madame de P*** went away, and Madame du Reſnel after having completely undreſſed herſelf, put out the candles, left a lamp burning, and approached the bed in order to lie down. Figure to yourſelf her ſurprize and fright when ſhe perceived me, on partly opening the curtains, and ſtepping into bed!... I was motionleſs, I had my eyes ſhut, and I appeared to be found aſleep. Madame du Reſnel, who was for ſome minutes really petrified, durſt not make the ſmalleſt movement. At length ſhe ſlipped entirely into bed, when a violent tre-

mor agitated her whole body ..... ſhe grew calm by degrees, and about ſix o'clock in the morning ſhe fell aſleep. I then got up ſoftly, and flew to my room, having had time to reflect. My reſolution was taken: the converſation of the two friends had apprized me that all Madame du Reſnel's ſervants, and even my porter, where wholly or partly in her confidence. Without loſing a moment, I diſcharged her waiting women, her two footmen, her coachman and my porter, who immediately left the houſe; and through the aſſiſtance of my own people, I replaced, in leſs than three hours, all theſe diſcarded domeſtics.

Madame du Reſnel rang for the ſecond time, when the two new waiting women entered my cabinet; I ſent them to their poſt, and finiſhed dreſſing myſelf. In the mean time, Madame du Reſnel, out of patience at not ſeeing her women arrive, had riſen to call them; no one anſwering, ſhe

ſhe went to a window that overlooked the court, and called her ſervants.

The new porter coming out of his lodge, aſked her what ſhe wanted. "And you," ſaid ſhe, "who are you?"—"Monſieur "du Reſnel's porter," anſwered he. This reply confounded her; however ſhe deſired him to ſend up her women and her ſervants, and then returned to her chamber. A minute after, ſhe ſaw enter two unknown footmen, who aſked her what were her commands; ſhe became confuſed, made no reply, and the two new waiting women appeared. Her uneaſineſs was now at its height; ſhe fell back into an arm-chair, melted into tears, and made a ſign that ſhe wiſhed to be alone. At noon ſhe rang her bell; ſhe was found quite dreſſed. She inquired where I was, and was informed that I was juſt gone out. She ordered her horſes to be put to, and when ſhe was told that the carriage was ready, ſhe gave orders to take off the

horſes again. At two o'clock ſhe went into the dining parlour; the cloth was laid, there were two covers..... She ſurveyed this table, and aſked the butler with much emotion if I was come in; he anſwered that he did not know. She returned to her own room; a quarter of an hour after, the ſervants told her that dinner was ſerved up. I was already in the dining room ſeated at the table, and my ſervants as uſual were ſtanding behind me. Madame du Reſnel made me wait for her ten minutes; at laſt ſhe came; her deportment had ſomething wild; the redneſs of her eyes and the paleneſs of her face made it almoſt impoſſible to know her: ſhe had a bottle of ſalts in her hand; ſhe trembled on perceiving me, and turned away her eyes; ſhe then ſat down, muttering in a low voice that ſhe had a violent head-ach. She did not unfold her napkin. I was a moment without ſpeaking; I then exhorted her in a calm, but very firm tone, to *get*

the

get the better of her feelings, and to eat. She obeyed: I talked of indifferent things; ſhe made an effort to anſwer; but ſhe could articulate only a few monoſyllables, which expired on her trembling lips. I ſeveral times offered to help her from the diſhes which were before me. At each offer ſhe thanked me by an extremely humble inclination of the head; ſhe then drew out her pocket handkerchief, and carried it to her face, in order to conceal and dry up her tears. Every moment ſeemed to increaſe her confuſion, and pity deeply inſinuated itſelf into my heart. Towards the concluſion of dinner, ſhe ventured to lift her eyes on me, and our looks met. I experienced a ſomething I cannot expreſs; it ſeemed to me that ſhe had juſt opened to me her whole ſoul, that I had juſt ſeen her anxiety, her vague and ſiniſter fears, and the exceſs of her repentance: this timid and ſupplicating look informed me better, and touched me more than all that ſhe

could have ſaid to me. Being greatly affected, I drank a glaſs of water. Madame du Reſnel put her two hands on her face in drawing back her chair, as if ſhe had wiſhed to riſe from table; I got up, I approached her, I took her by the arm, ſhe raiſed herſelf with difficulty; ſhe could ſcarcely ſtand; ſhe ſtrongly preſſed my hand againſt her boſom; her ſobs intercepted her reſpiration; ſhe leant her head on my ſhoulder, and in this manner I hurried her into the ſaloon. No ſooner were we alone, than ſhe threw herſelf at my feet, giving a free courſe to her tears. I raiſed her up, I carried her to an arm-chair, and ſat down beſide her. I had purpoſed to ſpeak to her with a calm and ſolemn ſeverity; but I had much difficulty to moderate my feelings..... She held my hands, ſqueezed them in hers, and bathed them with her tears.... There was a long ſilence; at length, muſtering up all my ſtrength: "I can," ſaid I to her,

her, " pardon a firſt error; your youth, " the advice which has involved you, the " ſituation in which I ſee you, every " thing perſuades me that your heart is " not yet corrupted. Break off without " delay your criminal connexions, ſin- " cerely return to virtue; I ſhall have " over you a watchful and penetrating " eye; you will not deceive me: if your " ſoul is generous and grateful, we ſhall ſtill " be able to be again happy, you will " find means to expiate and repair a fault, " the pardon of which you ought never to " hope for; I ſhall ſpeak to you no more " of it, but I ſhall watch you; time alone " can reſtore you my confidence, and till " then I will be towards you only a vigilant " witneſs and an inflexible judge."—At theſe words I roſe up: ſhe again fell at my knees; and, as I was going away, ſhe crept towards me in this attitude. Without

ſtopping, I told her to calm her ſpirits, and I haſtily left the room.

That very day ſhe wrote to me the moſt affecting letter. This letter contained another for her couſin Madame de P***, in which Madame du Reſnel declared to her poſitively that ſhe never would ſee her again.

The next morning I ſet out with my wife for my eſtate at B***. We there ſpent eight ſucceſſive months, and during all this time I received none but my intimate friends. Madame du Reſnel become the moſt humble, the moſt intereſting of women, had reaſſumed all her rights over my heart. It ſeemed to me even that I loved her with a more tender affection than before ſhe had gone aſtray; and I ſtill think that, at this period, ſhe was in fact worthy of inſpiring a great attachment. Repentance and gratitude had produced in her the moſt happy change. Born

with

with an eaſy and weak diſpoſition, impetuous paſſions, a burning imagination, and a conſiderable ſhare of underſtanding, ſhe without difficulty paſſed from one extreme to the other, and could not be indifferent and moderate, either in evil or in good. She had turned with ardour towards devotion; on our return to Paris, ſhe hired an apartment in a convent, in order to repair thither ſometimes, during thoſe ſolemn occaſions conſecrated by the church, or when I ſhould go without her to the country to viſit my friends. She would no longer wear *rouge*; I exhorted her to do nothing that might make her ſingular, and for the ſame reaſon I, in ſome meaſure, forced her to accompany me from time to time to the play. I alſo obliged her to ſee more company than ſhe would have wiſhed to receive: at length not being able to endure the melancholy occaſioned her by the remorſe which ſhe carefully nouriſhed, I neglected no opportunity to

raiſe her in her own eyes. I wiſhed only to regulate her devotion, but I cooled it; and my imprudent encomiums ſoon ended by effacing from her heart the ſalutary repentance, which could alone preſerve in it the taſte of virtue. Extreme generoſity is never dangerous with great characters; but common ſouls always abuſe it.

I ought not to have forgotten that it was neither paſſion nor ſenſibility that had led aſtray Madame du Reſnel; ſhe had yielded only to example, and to bad advice: this kind of frailty left no hope but in the abſolute removal of dangerous opportunities. I ought to have thought, that with youth ſo brilliant, beauty ſo remarkable, a head ſo warm, and a diſpoſition ſo volatile, it was neceſſary, in order to reſcue her from her own weakneſs, to withdraw her from the world, or at leaſt, from every ſort of diſſipation. I made not theſe reflections; and the auſterity of her outward appearance, that ſuperficial devotion which

diſpelled

diſpelled my fears, principally contributed to corrupt her without reſource; for ſhe was under the neceſſity either of betraying herſelf and completing her ruin, or of becoming the moſt audacious of hypocrites. Her choice could not be doubtful; ſhe would have choſen in like manner with much leſs riſk; for the ſole fear of an embarraſſing ſcene has often made weak people adopt a treacherous conduct.

However Madame du Reſnel ſtill appearing the ſame in my eyes, obtained with my moſt perfect eſteem that of all thoſe who approached her. Her adventure had made a noiſe, but the world has the indulgence to forget eaſily when a huſband forgives. People were at firſt miſtruſtful of the devotion of a charming woman of twenty; afterwards, when they ſaw a ſteady and regular conduct, an auſterity without ill-humour, a virtue equally amiable and irreproachable, admiration became general. Three years glided away

in this manner. For upwards of a twelve-month, I was indebted only to error for the happineſs which I enjoyed: ſhe employed to deceive me artifices too well combined and too odious, for it to be poſſible for me to ſuſpect them.

From my earlieſt youth I had a fondneſs for pictures. The moſt famous amateur of Paris, Monſieur R ***, had juſt died. Among his pictures, there was one in particular which I had long been exceedingly deſirous to poſſeſs, and for which I had in vain ſeveral times offered a very conſiderable ſum. As ſoon as I was informed of the death of Monſieur R ***, I charged Remi, my ſecretary, to go to his ſale and to buy this picture, which he brought me; he told me that he had met at the ſale the young Duke de Roſmond, who had gone thither only to purchaſe this very picture; but learning that I wiſhed for it, he had immediately renounced it, ſaying *that this*

deference was due to the firſt connoiſſeur in Paris. Such a compliment greatly flattered my vanity, and I conſidered the proceeding ſo handſome that I thought it incumbent on me to go and leave my card at the Duke's houſe. I mentioned the circumſtance to Madame du Reſnel, who careleſsly anſwered me that, in her opinion, it would be ſufficient to ſend Remi to thank him in my name. I perſiſted, however, in my intention; and as I had announced to my wife, I went the next day to the Duke's at the hour of the opera, imagining that he would not be at home; but I was ſhewn in. I found the Duke in his cabinet, ſeated at his deſk, and reading; he appeared very much ſurpriſed on ſeeing me; yet he received me with that grace and politeneſs for which he is diſtinguiſhed. He ſhewed me a very fine gallery of pictures, and I left his houſe quite delighted with his perſon and converſation.

The

The Duke de Roſmond, ſo celebrated for the charms of his mind and of his figure, as well as for his profound depravity, is certainly the moſt dangerous being of his ſpecies: nothing in him beſpeaks foppery; his hair always neglected, his careleſs and ſomewhat abſent air, his unaffected and natural manners, rather announce bluntneſs and an indifference to pleaſe.

Superficial in every thing, except in the art of ſeducing, he has only the kind of education that can impoſe on people of faſhion; his ſupple and cunning mind is far from being comprehenſive; his ſoul is abſolutely devoid of elevation and ſenſibility; he has only one kind of penetration, but that he poſſeſſes in a very ſuperior degree. In ſtudying mankind, he knows how to diſtinguiſh in them only their weakneſſes, their whims, and their vices; virtues eſcape him, he has no faith in them. Though he has no ſort of princi-

ples,

ples, yet he thinks that a man ſhould never neglect an opportunity of doing good when he can do it without perſonal riſk, and without its coſting any ſacrifice. All that is beyond this moral, and this ſort of goodneſs, is in his eyes only folly: delicacy, generoſity, heroiſm, are to him nothing but extravagances, or the effect of ſome ſecret calculations, which he ſuppoſes to be always founded on perſonal intereſt; ſublime virtue ſeems to him only the impoſture of a narrow mind, or the cunning artifice of a profound genius.

A knowledge of the world has informed the Duke de Roſmond, that the moſt delicate flattery is not always the moſt perſuaſive. People's minds are ſo refined, that the moſt ingenious praiſes, by their very charm, are become ſuſpicious. The Duke de Roſmond ſhews fineſſe only when he cenſures; his epigrams are full of point and delicacy: but when he flatters, he wiſhes only to appear ſincere; his encomiums

comiums have a laconiſm, and a ſort of coarſeneſs which render their effect irreſiſtible in the mouth of ſo witty a man. He beſtows them as if he was expreſſing nothing but trivial truths generally acknowleged; and his manner and his tone allow it not to be ſuſpected that he has the ſmalleſt intention to oblige or pleaſe. His praiſes are received by perſons the leaſt proud: he does not *give them*, they *eſcape* him; how *refuſe* them? If by chance they venture to find them exaggerated, he does not inſiſt, but he puts on ſo aſtoniſhed a look that they almoſt bluſh at having been modeſt; they are afraid of being accuſed of falſe humility. Such is the dangerous perſonage, who has all the graces and all the vices neceſſary for running with ſucceſs the career of ambition, and that of gallantry, but who, in any other, would have been only a man of very moderate abilities.

In the courſe of a few days, the Duke de Roſmond came to return my viſit.

He

He found me alone with my wife, who received him with very formal politeneſs. The Duke on his part was very cool with her. He expreſſed to me a wiſh to ſee my pictures. I deſired him to fix a day; he named a very diſtant one. When he was gone, Madame du Reſnel ſaid to me, that ſhe hoped I would not form an intimacy with him; "for," added ſhe, "he has "a very bad reputation, and I have been "told ſome abominable traits of him."— "I own," replied I, "that I ſuſpect a "great deal of exaggeration in the ill that "is ſaid of him; I have always a good "opinion of young men of his rank who "have a cultivated underſtanding and a "paſſionate fondneſs for the arts."— "Well," rejoined Madame du Reſnel, "he purchaſes pictures only through "vanity, and I will lay a wager that he "is not the ſmalleſt judge of them."— "That is what I ſhall know," replied I, "when he comes to ſee my cabinet; be-"ſides, I have no inclination to draw him

"here;

" here; I think him far too brilliant for " us, but he has done me a very great " piece of civility, and I wiſh to ſhew " that I have a proper ſenſe of it."

On the day appointed the Duke came at noon. My wife did not make her appearance, and I alone did the honours of my cabinet. He examined my pictures as a connoiſſeur, particularly praiſing all thoſe which I eſteemed the moſt, and naming all the maſters. I was enchanted with his taſte and knowledge; I detained him without perceiving it till dinner time; then a ſervant entered, and told him that his coachman had juſt that moment diſcovered that the tire of one of the wheels of his chariot was almoſt entirely detached, and that conſequently it was neceſſary to go to his houſe to bring him another carriage. The Duke appeared much concerned at this accident; he wiſhed to go away on foot; I invited him to dinner: he at firſt refuſed; I inſiſted;

and

and at length he conſented to ſtay. Madame du Reſnel had the air of ſurpriſe on ſeeing him enter the drawing room, and ſhe received with much coldneſs the compliment which he addreſſed her on this occaſion.

I had on that day two or three artiſts to dinner. The Duke charmed them by his converſation; he retired at a very early hour, and, when he was gone, every one ſpoke in his praiſe, with the exception of my wife, who kept the moſt profound ſilence. However ſhe expreſſed to me a wiſh to ſee the Duke's collection of pictures, but ſhe would abſolutely not go to his houſe, except when he ſhould be at Verſailles. We therefore went to view his pictures in his abſence. Madame du Reſnel was enraptured with a large ſquare picture repreſenting a Magdalen; ſhe told me that ſhe paſſionately wiſhed to have it, in order to place it in her *oratory*, (ſhe named thus a ſmall cabinet *conſecrated to piety*,

piety, in which ſhe ſhut herſelf up every day for three or four hours). "There," continued ſhe, ſqueezing my hand, and venting a deep ſigh, "there is my model; "I would wiſh to have it always under "my eyes." At theſe words ſhe took out her pocket handkerchief, and covered her face with it. I thought that ſhe was wiping away her tears, and mine flowed in good earneſt! . . . . . .

This picture, although it was a charming one, was only a copy; ſo I thought I might without impropriety requeſt the Duke to diſpoſe of it to me. He yielded to my wiſh with his accuſtomed obligingneſs, and the Magdalen was brought to my houſe. Madame du Reſnel ſome time after made me enter her *oratory*, in order to ſee there her dear Magdalen, which ſhe had cauſed to be let into the wall in a receſs forming a ſort of niche, on the edge of which were vaſes filled with flowers: below the niche was a ſmall deſk covered with

with books of devotion. As I was admiring the elegance of this arrangement, Madame du Reſnel thanked me again for having given her this picture. "It is," ſaid ſhe, "the principal ornament of this "place which is ſo dear to me, of this "peaceful retreat where glide away the "ſweeteſt moments of my life!" ....

All theſe little details will appear to you ſcrupulouſly minute; but the ſequel of my ſtory will ſhew you that I ought neither to forget them, nor to paſs them over in ſilence.

We received a note from the Dutcheſs de Roſmond inviting us to ſupper. My wife poſitively refuſed; I thought I muſt accept the invitation, and I went alone to the Duke's. I arrived very early; I found the Duke *tête-à-tête* with his wife, a young woman of an agreeable perſon, by whom he is adored, and whom he has found the ſecret to render happy by deceiving her reſpecting his conduct, and treating her with

with the greateſt attention, and with every mark of tenderneſs. I made an apology for Madame du Reſnel. The Duke received it coldly, appeared neither ſurpriſed nor ſorry, and immediately ſpoke of ſomething elſe. When I entered, he was ſitting by the ſide of his wife, holding on his knees his ſon, a charming child two or three years old. Several perſons ſucceſſively dropped in, and almoſt all of my acquaintance. At ſupper the Dutcheſs made me ſit next to her, and appeared almoſt to think of no one but me. She told me that the Duke was paſſionately fond of the arts and literature, was delighted with my converſation and my company, and that ſhe hoped I would come often to ſee her houſe. The Dutcheſs ingenuouſly repeated *her leſſon* without underſtanding in it the ſmalleſt fineſſe, and ſhe had no difficulty to perſuade me of things which ſhe earneſtly believed herſelf, and with which my vanity

was warmly flattered. This evening completely attached me to the Duke de Roſmond; he received me in ſo amiable a manner, he appeared to me ſo good a huſband, ſo tender a father, *ſuch a good ſort of man*, that from that moment I looked on all his enemies as envious perſons and calumniators.

I went from time to time to his houſe, and I frequently invited him to come to mine. He anſwered me one day, "I "*frankly* own to you I have perceived "that Madame du Reſnel is prejudiced "againſt me. I am not ſurpriſed at it," continued he; "many people ſpeak ill of "me, and I committed a few follies in the "beginning of my marriage; but a ſincere "attachment has made me prudent; I "have no merit in being ſo, I am paſ-"ſionately fond of my wife." He then praiſed the Dutcheſs to me with ſuch enthuſiaſm that I was quite melted. He perceived that the tears ſtood in my eyes and

and ſqueezing my hand affectionately: "It is pleaſant," ſaid he to me, "to thus "open my heart to a man like you; but I "am never tempted to ſay ſimilar things "to thoſe depraved beings with whom the "world is filled, and who do not compre- "hend that a man can poſſibly be in love "with his wife."

My admiration and friendſhip for the Duke increaſed daily. He came ſometimes to ſup with me, having, he ſaid, made up his mind reſpecting the *cold receptions* of Madame du Reſnel, who conſtantly treated him with the ſame ſeverity. She omitted no opportunity of ſpeaking ill of him; and I was thoroughly perſuaded that ſhe had taken him in utter averſion.

We had for neighbour Monſieur de ***, a very rich old man, ſo extremely avaricious, and of ſo vile a character, that he was univerſally accuſed of carrying on the infamous trade of uſurer and of lending money on pledges. His houſe adjoined

joined to mine, we had even a party-wall; but notwithſtanding this proximity, I had never ſet my foot in the houſe of ſo deſpicable a character, who, beſides, ſaw no company.

One evening, my wife ſaid to me with an air of triumph, that ſhe had made a charming diſcovery: "It is," continued ſhe, "that the Duke de Roſmond goes "pretty often to our neighbour's, Mon-"ſieur de ***; our ſervants have ſeen "him come out of his houſe ſeveral "times, always alone, on foot, and pri-"vately. It is evident," added ſhe, "that he goes there only to borrow "money at an uſurious intereſt; this "proves to you that his affairs are in a "deplorable ſtate; the hint may be uſe-"ful to you, avail yourſelf of it." I aſſured Madame du Reſnel that the Duke had never given me to underſtand that he was in want of money; ſhe ſhook her head: "I am miſtaken perhaps," re-

ſumed ſhe, "but I confeſs that the friend-
"ſhip of a prodigal and diſſipated man of
"faſhion, for a financier, appears to me a
"little ſuſpicious." This reaſoning ſtruck me; for the viſits to the uſurer gave it great weight; I kept on my guard, I even ſounded the Duke on this point; he came off with flying colours from this trial, which ſerved only to give me a higher opinion of his delicacy, of his ſentiments, and of his friendſhip for me; for I ended by naturally aſking him whether it was true that he had been to M. de ***'s. He admitted it; and he added, that he ſhould even be compelled to go thither again repeatedly; but that it was ſolely to arrange an unfortunate affair of one of his friends, whom the uſurer had ſhamefully cheated. He told me on this ſubject a long ſtory, in which he acted a part that ſtruck me with the more admiration, as he made me promiſe the moſt profound ſecrecy. Charmed at this confidence, I

could

could not help ſaying to Madame du Reſnel that in fact the Duke went to the uſurer's; but that I knew his reaſons for ſo doing, and that I approved of them from the bottom of my heart. She ſmiled, anſwering me: "In truth, he makes you "believe whatever he pleaſes." The ſmile was very natural, and the anſwer perfectly juſt.

For upwards of a year, I was intimately connected with the Duke de Roſmond; my eſteem for him would admit of no increaſe, it was even carried to enthuſiaſm. St. Méran tried in vain to undeceive me, by telling me that this connexion made me appear ridiculous, and gave riſe to *ſtrange reports*. I was angry without chooſing to hear any thing, and I grew cool towards the ſincere friend who wiſhed to open my eyes. The Duke, ſo profoundly cunning, ſo deceitful with me, had not been able to reſiſt the pleaſure of

boaſting of his ſucceſs. Self-conceit cannot be ſilent; and, notwithſtanding all the ſtratagems of the moſt aſtoniſhing hypocriſy, every one ſuſpected the truth. I alone was miſtaken; but I blindly indulged myſelf in my error.

It was near the end of Lent, and Madame du Reſnel, according to her cuſtom, went at this period to ſhut herſelf up in her convent, in order to ſpend there a week in *abſolute retirement*.

Two or three days after her departure, chance led me to diſcover an excellent miniature painter newly arrived from Italy. I went to his houſe one morning very early, and I begged him to ſhew me ſome portraits of his performance. I ſat down near a table, and while he was looking over a port-folio, my eyes fell on a ſilk handkerchief, lying on the table, and remarkable for its extreme fineneſs, and the brightneſs of the colours of the border. This handkerchief fixed all my attention, becauſe

becauſe I had given ſome reſembling it to Madame du Reſnel. I felt myſelf agitated without knowing why. I took up the handkerchief; I looked for the mark, and found an *M* and an *R*, Madame du Reſnel's cypher!..... The painter ſeeing me examine this handkerchief, told me it belonged to a young and handſome lady, who came to him to ſit for her picture. I diſſembled my confuſion, and aſked him how this handkerchief came into his hands. "The young lady," anſwered he, "forgot it yeſterday, and I have not "had it in my power to ſend it to her, "becauſe I am ignorant both of her name "and addreſs; ſhe comes here with a "great deal of myſtery, and, after every "ſitting, ſhe takes away her picture." At theſe words, a violent palpitation of the heart prevented me from continuing my queſtions. At length, reſuming the converſation: "It is clear," ſaid I to him,

" that this lady has her picture drawn for " a lover."—" On the contrary," rejoined the painter, " if her word may be " taken, it is for her husband, whom she " wishes to surprise agreeably on his " birth-day, which falls, she says, on St. " Mark's day."—I trembled at this name, because in fact St. Mark is my patron. " And in what manner does she have " herself painted?" asked I again.—" *As* " *a Magdalen*," answered the painter, " with purple and lilac drapery." At these words I breathed, not doubting then that this picture, in imitation of the picture of the *oratory*, was really intended for me. This idea appeared to me at once natural, ingenious, and affecting. However I stood in need of composing myself, and of reflecting on this adventure; for I still felt at the bottom of my heart a vague uneasiness that oppressed me. I shortened my visit; as I was going away, the

the painter aſking me my name, I told him a fictitious one, and I quitted him, promiſing to call again.

I returned home. A crowd of alarming reflections ruſhed into my mind; the more I thought of the matter, the leſs did it appear to me probable that a perſon ſo prudent, ſo timorous as Madame du Reſnel, would take ſuch a ſuſpicious ſtep with the ſole view of occaſioning me a little agreeable ſurpriſe. It ſeemed to me but too likely, that the confidence made to the painter reſpecting my birth-day, was only a precaution artfully taken to ſkreen herſelf from every accident that might happen. I even imagined that Madame du Reſnel, always carrying away the picture, was perhaps cauſing it to be copied as faſt as it was done, in order to have two; and that conſequently the preſent of this picture on my birth-day, would not be to me a poſitive proof of her innocence, ſince I ſhould ſtill be juſtified in

ſuſpecting that ſhe had formed this intrigue only in order to be able to diſpoſe at her pleaſure of a ſecond portrait. However this Magdalen's dreſs ſeemed to indicate that the picture was drawn for no one but me; yet the copy deſtined *for the lover* might perhaps be different!

What to do to clear up ſuch cruel doubts? To go to the painter's and ſurpriſe Madame du Reſnel, would throw no light on the matter; Madame du Reſnel would repeat that ſhe was ſitting for her picture for me. To wait for my birth-day, as I have already ſaid, would procure me no better information. It was therefore neceſſary to remain for ever in this dreadful ſuſpenſe! What a tormenting thought! On the other hand, I reproached myſelf for my ſuſpicions, when I reflected on the auſtere and ſteady conduct of Madame du Reſnel for upwards of three years paſt. In ſhort, what lover could ſhe have? The idea of the Duke

de

de Roſmond did not even preſent itſelf to my mind; and I ſaw not, beſides, any object that could reaſonably inſpire me with the ſhadow of miſtruſt. I was then obliged to ſuppoſe that if Madame du Reſnel had a lover, that lover was an entire ſtranger to me. But how could ſhe have formed this connexion? With the exception of a few days of the year which ſhe paſſed in her convent, ſhe hardly ever quitted me; ſhe went out only with me, and in general ſhe was extremely ſedentary; ſhe ſhut herſelf up every day for three or four hours in her *oratory*; but this cabinet at the end of our apartment, and at the extremity of our houſe, had no ſecret outlet: ſituated above an *entre-ſol**, it had but a ſingle window on a firſt floor exceſſively high, and looking into a broad ſtreet which was a very great thoroughfare, and to enter it, there

* A low ſtory, divided into ſmall apartments, ſituated between the ground floor and the firſt floor. —*Tranſlator.*

was a neceſſity for croſſing all our apartments. I was bewildered in theſe different reflections.

Urged by an inſurmountable inquietude, I went into Madame du Reſnel's *oratory*; I examined it carefully, and I diſcovered there nothing but ſubjects of edification. I opened the drawers of the little deſk placed below the picture of the Magdalen, and I there found a ſmall book bound in Morocco, in which ſhe had written a few maxims and ſome verſes of her compoſition, that ſhe had never ſhewn to me. I read them; they were made on the picture of the Magdalen, and I was charmed with the ſentiments of piety which they ſeemed to expreſs; I was far from comprehending their double meaning. I was reading them over again with pleaſure, when I heard a great noiſe near me; I liſtened with an extreme ſurpriſe. The movement which I heard was paſſing behind the picture of the Magdalen; the niche that con-

tained it was placed in a party-wall which ſeparated my houſe from that of my old neighbour; but I knew the thickneſs of this wall, and it was ſuch that the receſs of the niche ought to have occupied but a ſmall part of it; thus I did not conceive that it was poſſible to hear ſo diſtinctly what was paſſing behind this wall. But imagine, if it be poſſible, what I muſt have felt on ſeeing all at once the picture of the Magdalen ſhake, enter the wall, diſappear, and leave a large opening, or ſort of window, looking into a great room, and finding myſelf oppoſite to a young man unknown to me, well dreſſed, and with a very handſome face, who, on perceiving me, broke out into an immoderate fit of laughter! ..... Nothing can give an idea of the rage with which I was tranſported! "Infamous ſuborner!" exclaimed I.—On ſaying theſe words, I overſet the writing-deſk in order to paſs through the opening and ruſh forward on

the young man. At that moment a grave perſonage, with an enormous wig, and clothed in a long black gown, advanced, and placed himſelf in the opening, ſaying to me, " *Monſieur du Reſnel, you are miſtaken,* " *I aſſure you.*"

This new viſion, overſetting my ideas, rendered me motionleſs. I looked ſtedfaſtly at this man, and I recogniſed him to be the commiſſary of the quarter. While I was ſurveying him with a ſtupid aſtoniſhment, he informed me that the old uſurer, my neighbour, had died ſuddenly the night before; that the young man I had juſt ſeen, inheriting all his property had come to the houſe, with officers of juſtice, in order to have the ſeals affixed. " You muſt alſo know," continued the commiſſary, " that the ſervants of the " late M. de *** have aſſured us that a " treaſure muſt be concealed in this place; " becauſe at the beginning of laſt ſum- " mer the deceaſed had cauſed workmen

" to

" to work here ſecretly, and that ſince
" that time he carefully kept the key of
" this room, and ſuffered not a ſervant
" to enter into it. We therefore viſited
" this myſterious apartment. The heir
" of the deceaſed on perceiving this
" wainſcot pannel, thought to diſcover the
" cloſet that contained the treaſure, but
" he ſought in vain for a lock; at length
" leaning, by chance, his hand on a con-
" cealed ſpring, the pannel opened by
" entering into the groove made in the
" wall."

After having liſtened to this ſtory, I begged the commiſſary to ſhut the pannel again, which he did immediately. The Magdalen re-appeared, and I, being no longer able to ſtand on my legs, fell into a chair in a ſtate impoſſible to be deſcribed.

At the expiration of a few minutes, I again took up the verſes of Madame du Reſnel, thoſe verſes on the picture of the Magdalen

Magdalen which I had read with ſo much edification. I wiſhed to reperuſe them; they are ſufficiently curious for me to tranſcribe them here, and are as follows:

What change of thought in this retreat I find,
Where all my worldly cares are left behind!
Before this ſhrine what raptures have I felt!
Here my heart learns to tremble, and to melt;
Here hopes of bliſs to come my pow'rs employ,
I taſte the ſweets of viſionary joy:
Dead to the world, I view no object here,
But one, one only to my boſom dear:
I faint—I glow—I burn—in tranſports toſt,
Till ev'ry ſenſe in imag'd joys is loſt;
The lifeleſs portrait I behold no more;
The living Saint appears whom I adore,
Then, then I feel ineffable delight,
And all heav'n opens to my raviſh'd ſight *.

Thus

* For the gratification of the *amateurs* of French poetry, we here ſubjoin the lines of the original. Our intelligent readers will, we flatter ourſelves, agree

Thus had this audacious hypocrite, under the maſk of myſtic piety, had the art to detail, with exactneſs, the whole myſtery of her criminal intrigue!.....

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agree with us in opinion, that in rendering verſe from one language into another, free imitation, which ſhall convey the true *ſpirit* and *meaning* of the author, is ever preferable to ſervile tranſlation. This has been our aim in the above verſion.—*Tranſlator's note.*

Dans ce réduit myſtérieux
Qu'il m'eſt doux de cacher ma vie,
Et ſur cette image chérie
D'attacher ma penſée et de fixer mes vœux!
Ici tremblante, éperdue, attendrie
Je m'abandonne au charme heureux
D'une touchante rêverie
Et d'un eſpoir délicieux.
Je ne vois que l'objet auquel je ſacrifie:
Ce monde ſi vain je l'oublie,
Tout, juſqu'à ce tableau, diſparoît à mes yeux!.....
Ah! c'eſt alors que mon âme eſt ravie,
Et que pour moi s'ouvrent les cieux!—

The

The certainty of her perfidy threw me into an aſtoniſhment, which each remembrance augmented! ..... Every thing was juſt cleared up to me. It was not difficult for me to gueſs who was her lover. On recollecting the Duke de Roſmond's frequent viſits to my old neighbour, it did not need much penetration to imagine that the uſurer, ſeduced by money, had conſented to all that was required of him. I then ſaw through what motive Madame du Reſnel had informed me of the Duke's connexions with the uſurer. By this artful accuſation, ſhe anticipated every ſuſpicion to which her lover's viſits might give riſe, if other perſons had remarked it; ſhe confirmed me in the opinion that I had of her averſion for the Duke, and ſhe found a method of ſtill increaſing my eſteem for him.

Although I was deeply ſtruck at the Duke de Roſmond's infamous behaviour, it appeared to me that Madame du Reſnel infinitely

infinitely ſurpaſſed him in duplicity. When I recollected all the particulars of her conduct, I found nothing comparable to the depth of her artifices and diſſimulation. With a woman really depraved, the moſt crafty and the moſt ſeducing *Lovelace* will never be more than a ſcholar.

The queſtion was to come to a determination; I had great need of advice; I therefore ſent for St. Méran, who came immediately. I told him the whole. He ſaid to me, that for a long time paſt he had ſuſpected the truth, the more ſo as the Duke had taken the liberty of ſporting ſeveral jokes reſpecting *my affection* for him, and my wife's *antipathy* to him. "I ſhould have wiſhed," continued St. Méran, "to "ſet your right as to the character "of the Duke de Roſmond, without un- "deceiving you in regard to that of Ma- "dame du Reſnel, ſince, after all, I had no "poſitive proofs of her infidelity; but you "never would hear me."——"Let us "forget

"forget the paſt," interrupted I, "and "think of the preſent."—"Have you an "intention of getting Madame du Reſnel "confined?"—"No, I hate *lettres de* "*cachet*, I will aſk for none."—"How- "ever, you will part from her?"—"Moſt "aſſuredly, and this very day; but I wiſh "before-hand to confound her, to unmaſk "her, and to puniſh her." I then entered into a detail of my ideas on this point. St. Méran approved ſeveral of them, rectified ſome, and we ſettled a plan which was executed as you ſhall ſee.

The widow of the Marſhal de G ***, Madame du Reſnel's aunt, was a reſpectable woman, of very confined underſtanding, but of ſincere piety, and the only perſon of her family who had almoſt entirely retired from the world. Since my marriage ſhe had loſt her only daughter, who had died without leaving any children. This event gave Madame du Reſnel the very well founded hope of one day inheriting

riting part of the property of Madame de G***, whoſe friendſhip ſhe aſſiduouſly cultivated. Madame du Reſnel's pretended devotion cauſed her to be cheriſhed by her aunt, and I believe that this view of intereſt greatly contributed to ſtrengthen the hypocriſy of the niece.

According to the plan on which I had reſolved, St. Méran wrote a note to Madame du Reſnel to tell her that I had been very ill with a ſort of epileptic fit, that I had been bled, that I was better, but ſtill very weak and in great pain. He wrote the ſame thing to Madame de G***, and ſent the two notes by two men on horſeback. The ſame ſtory was told to the greater part of my ſervants; and thoſe more immediately about my perſon, had their orders. We took, beſides, every precaution neceſſary for the execution of our deſign.

Madame du Reſnel arrived firſt; I heard her voice at a great diſtance. This voice, which

which a few days before had cauſed me ſuch ſweet ſenſations, would ſtill, in ſpite of myſelf, have produced on my heart a tranſient emotion, had the ſound of it been natural; but notwithſtanding the diſtance, I perfectly diſtinguiſhed that ſhe was giving it the hypocritical accent of the moſt profound grief. This falſehood which reminded me of ſo many others, reſtored to me all the coolneſs of the moſt ſovereign contempt. I was in a dreſſing gown, ſeated in an arm-chair..... The door flew open, Madame du Reſnel, with her hair diſhevelled, and all in tears, came and threw herſelf at my feet. I raiſed her up, telling her that I had ſuffered greatly: "Alas!" rejoined ſhe, ſobbing, "it is "very plain to be ſeen! How you are al-"tered!....."—"I muſt be indeed," anſwered I. At that moment Madame de G.*** was announced.

Madame du Reſnel wiſhing to diſplay before her aunt all her *conjugal affection*, made

made a pathetic ſcene, which ended by an hyſteric fit. Madame de G*** flew to the bell, in order to ring loudly for orange flower water. ..... She could not ſufficiently admire the extreme ſenſibility of her niece, conſtantly repeating: "*Ah, Monſieur du Reſnel! you are very fortunate, eſpecially in the age we live in!*"..... St. Méran repreſented, that in the weak ſtate in which I was, to affect my feelings, might be very prejudicial to me. Madame du Reſnel therefore became compoſed.

It was neceſſary for the execution of our project, to find a natural excuſe for conducting the aunt and the niece to *the oratory*; but Madame du Reſnel ſpared us the trouble of employing the expedient that we had deviſed. In the courſe of a few minutes ſhe roſe up, and went out by the door which led to the *oratory*. Her aunt aſked her, whither ſhe was going? ſhe anſwered with a myſterious air, that ſhe would

would return in a moment. St. Méran immediately divined this new trait of hypocriſy, and addreſſing himſelf to Madame de G***: "I will lay a wager," ſaid he, "that Madame du Reſnel quits us ſo "abruptly only in order to weep and pray, "without conſtraint, for our patient...." ——"O! ſhe is an angel!" interrupted Madame de G***"—"Let us go and "ſurpriſe her," ſaid I getting up. At theſe words, taking Madame de G*** by the hand, I hurried her into the *oratory*. As we proceeded without any precaution, and Madame de G*** repeated quite loud: "*She is an angel!*" it was impoſſible that Madame du Reſnel ſhould not hear us. In fact, we found her *bathed in tears* at the foot of the Magdalen, and praying with *ſuch a fervour*, that we had time to contemplate her before ſhe perceived us. A noiſy exclamation of her aunt drew her from her extacy. She looked at us with an air of aſtoniſhment.

"O!

"O! the poor little creature," cried Madame G***, "how diſconcerted ſhe is! "But, my child," continued ſhe, "this "is a trick of your huſband's; is it not a "very wicked one?....." At theſe words, Madame du Reſnel threw herſelf into the arms of her aunt, who embraced her a thouſand times. St. Méran brought chairs, and we ſat down in the *oratory*. We then examined every thing that was in this cabinet; Madame de G*** admired the choice of the books; ſhe would read all the titles of them; Madame du Reſnel and St. Méran haſtened to preſent them to her; this examination being finiſhed, St. Méran opened the drawer of the deſk, and ſeeing the book containing the verſes on the Magdalen; "Ah!" ſaid he, "here's an- "other ſmall volume."—At theſe words, Madame du Reſnel ſaid, that this book was a manuſcript, and that it contained nothing but *her thoughts* and a few *bad verſes*; the aunt would hear them read; the

the *authoreſs* made a feeble reſiſtance. At length, yielding to the deſire that we all expreſſed, ſhe read with a brazen face and deliberate tone, ſome maxims with a double meaning, perfectly well written in their kind, and then the verſes on the Magdalen. During this reading, Madame de G***, ſoftened, exclaimed upwards of twenty times: "That's charming..... "what an angel!... what an angel!..." Impatient to arrive at the *dénouement*, I roſe up, and turning towards the aunt: "Madame," ſaid I to her, "you do not "yet know how ingenious theſe verſes "are; look ſtedfaſtly at that picture." On ſaying theſe words, I gave the ſignal agreed on, Remi, my ſecretary, placed behind the pannel, touched the ſpring, and the Magdalen ſlipped into the wall. At the ſame time I caſt my eyes on Madame du Reſnel; ſhe ſhuddered, and her face was covered with a frightful paleneſs..... "Well, Madam," continued I, ſtill addreſſing

dreſſing the aunt, " is not that a pretty piece " of mechaniſm ?" .... " What does this " mean ?" interrupted Madame de G***.—" That your niece," anſwered I, " has invented this ſtratagem in order " to receive daily her lover the Duke de " Roſmond.—" Ah! Monſieur du Reſnel," exclaimed my wife, in a lamentable tone, " can't you gratify your criminal paſſion, " and part from me, without diſhonour- " ing me ? ...." — " What, Madam," interrupted I, " What do you mean ?"— " No," rejoined ſhe, with energy, " not- " withſtanding your going aſtray, notwith- " ſtanding the injuries you have done me, " I cannot believe that this ſhameful plot " is of your own invention..... O ! my " dear aunt," continued ſhe, ſhe throw- ing herſelf at Madame de G***'s feet, " you, who are the only friend I have left " in the world, will you abandon me ? It " is true, I have kept the ſecret to my-

"ſelf; but it is ſo painful to unveil the "ſhame of a huſband, and that cruel man "was ſo dear to me!..... At length "I muſt ſpeak out: therefore know the "truth." Then, without taking breath, Madame du Reſnel, with inconceivable volubility, immediately compoſed a fable the moſt void of foundation. She related that for eighteen months paſt I was madly in love with Mademoiſelle ***, a dancer belonging to the opera-houſe; that I kept her, and that I was ruining myſelf for her. I ſuffered her to vent all theſe calumnies without interrupting her; independently of my being petrified with aſtoniſhment, I felt an extreme curioſity to ſee to what a pitch ſhe would carry impoſture and effrontery. Beſides, I thought myſelf very ſure of confounding her, when, in my turn, I ſhould tell the ſtory. St. Méran being no longer able to repreſs his indignation, would interrupt her: "Hold your tongue," ſaid ſhe to him,

him, "treacherous friend, who, after "having in vain tried to ſeduce me, "threatened to bring me to ruin. It is "you, who availing yourſelf of your "aſcendancy over the mind of Monſieur "du Reſnel, and of his paſſion for a cour-"tezan, it is you who have hatched this "odious plot; it is you, who, while I was "ſhut up in a convent, have had that wall "pierced ..... With what abominable "art have you afterwards drawn me into "the ſnare! With what falſehood have "you prevailed on my aunt to repair "hither! ..... Did you not write to me "that Monſieur du Reſnel had been bled "twice? let him ſhew the marks of thoſe "bleedings....."—"No, Madam," re-joined I, "in fact I was not ill;"—"You hear him;" exclaimed Madame du Reſnel, "ſee, aunt, on which ſide falſe-"hood is!"—"Really, Monſieur du Reſ-"nel," ſaid Madame de G***, "there's "an avowed falſehood." I conſidered

this remark ſo ſilly, that I remained ſtupified. "The Duke de Roſmond my "lover!" rejoined Madame du Reſnel; "great God! Dare you, Monſieur du "Reſnel, maintain ſuch a calumny? When "you know ſo well my averſion to him, "when I have done every thing to prevent "you from receiving him?"—"What, "Madam," ſaid St. Méran at laſt, approaching her at the ſame time with a face inflamed with rage, "I have made to you "declarations of love?"—"Monſter!" replied Madame du Reſnel, "can you "have the audacity to interrogate me? "and did you not laſt ſummer dare to "conceal yourſelf in this very cabinet? "Do you remember your acts of violence, "and your threats?" Here Madame de G*** made a geſture of indignation, which proved to us, that ſhe believed all this fable. We remained petrified, St. Méran and I, looking ſtedfaſtly at each other, and Madame du Reſnel turning towards me:

"And

"And you, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "will you alſo "deny your adulterous love for Made- "moiſelle ***, when in contempt of all "decency, you do not bluſh to have her "picture in your chamber?"—"Ah! "Monſieur du Reſnel," ſaid Madame de G*** to me in a ſevere tone—"But "Madam," rejoined I, "deign to hear "me in my turn;"—"You muſt firſt, Sir," replied ſhe, "juſtify yourſelf on this "point: is it true, that you have in your "chamber Mademoiſelle ***'s picture?" —"Yes, Madam," anſwered I; "but"— "It is ſufficient, Sir," interrupted Madame de G*** with dignity, throwing at me a terrible look, "every thing is per- "fectly cleared up to me; I will hear no "more. What courſe will you take? "My niece might, I am ſure, forget the "paſt; will you reform your conduct and "acknowledge your faults, or will you ſue "for a ſeparation?" At theſe words, Madame du Reſnel drew out her pocket-handkerchief,

kerchief, and applied it to her eyes, ſobbing at the ſame time. On this Madame de G*** ſaid to her gravely: "You "are very weak, niece, indeed, you are "very weak!"—"But, my friend," exclaimed St. Méran, "pray, let us ſend "for the commiſſary." —"He meant the commiſſary who had affixed the ſeals in the uſurer's houſe, and who was an unſuſpected witneſs; but Madame de G*** thought that he alluded to a legal proceſs, and imagining her dignity expoſed, ſhe looked diſdainfully at St. Méran. "The threat is well contrived," ſaid ſhe to him, "I really believe, that "your brain is cracked! Come, niece," purſued ſhe, getting up, "come out of this "houſe, into which you ought never to "have ſet your foot. I take you under "my protection; and if Monſieur du Reſ-"nel wiſhes to be reconciled to you, or to "go to law, he can write to you, or "apply to my lawyers, who will give me

"an

"an account of his proceedings." At theſe words, ſhe took Madame du Reſnel under her arm, and went out of the houſe.

St. Méran was ſo tranſported with anger, that he wiſhed to ſpring forward towards the door, in order to prevent Madame de G*** from going out. "Be "quiet," ſaid I to him, "are you not "ſure that Madame de G*** will be "undeceived to-night? I will write to her." —"What!" exclaimed St. Méran, "do "you doubt, that Madame du Reſnel will "find means to intercept your letters, and "to prohibit you from all acceſs to her "aunt, whom ſhe will henceforth govern "at her pleaſure?"—"Well," rejoined I, "after all, of what conſequence is it to "me? I am for ever rid of this abomina- "ble woman; this, in the main, is all that "I wiſhed. With reſpect to my revenge, "I entruſt it to heaven. Be certain, that

" ſooner or later, vice is puniſhed, and that " hypocriſy always ends by betraying " itſelf."

I ſpoke ſincerely: for, in fact, I contented myſelf with ſending Madame du Reſnel her diamonds, and all that belonged to her, and with cauſing her to be told that ſhe ſhould be regularly paid the penſion of ten thouſand livres, which I had ſecured to her as a ſettlement.

I muſt now return to the calumny of Madame du Reſnel, relative to my pretended *adulterous paſſion*. Here is the truth; I had never in my life ſpoken to Mademoiſelle ***; but at the ſale of Monſieur R***'s pictures, I had publicly purchaſed a very fine portrait of that famous dancer, painted by Vanlo, and repreſenting the Muſe of dancing. This certainly was the moſt unequivocal thing in the world for an *amateur* of pictures; you have ſeen the ingenious turn that Madame

Madame du Reſnel contrived to give to this fact.

The Duke de Roſmond was at Verſailles, and was not to return till the next day. The very evening of the ſcene of which I have juſt given you an account, I wrote him a note conceived in theſe terms:

"It is contrary to my principles to "propoſe a duel, but when I am attacked "I know how to defend myſelf. I ſhall be "to-morrow morning at ſix o'clock with "the Viſcount de St. Méran in the *Bois* "*de Boulogne* in the alley of Madrid. I "ſhall return thither for a week together "at the ſame hour. If you wiſh to meet "me, you can repair thither with a friend; "you will there find the man who, of all "others, deſpiſes you the moſt, and fears "you the leaſt."

I accordingly went to the *Bois de Boulogne* with St. Méran for ſeven days ſucceſſively. The Duke came not thither,

and made me no anſwer. He is reckoned, however, not to be deficient in courage. I imagine that Madame du Reſnel's intereſt got the better of the reſentment that he muſt have felt at ſuch an inſulting challenge; for he could not fight with me without expoſing his miſtreſs, even to the eyes of Madame de G***, and thanks to the fertile imagination of Madame du Reſnel, and the credulity of her aunt, the ſtory of our ſeparation was generally told in the world to my diſadvantage; the teſtimony of a woman ſo virtuous and ſo reſpected as Madame de G***, had ſuch great weight, that all this clamour, far from hurting Madame du Reſnel, in a certain degree re-eſtabliſhed her reputation, which for ſome time was beginning to be very doubtful. Madame du Reſnel, received into her aunt's houſe, appeared completely juſtified; for my part, I could not, without covering myſelf with ridicule, relate and ſpread my ſtory; I therefore

had no other courſe to follow but that of ſilence.

It was then decided at court and in town that I had a bad character, and ſome monſtrous vices, and that Madame du Reſnel was the moſt unfortunate and the moſt engaging of women. Poor St. Méran was involved in my diſgrace; it was in vain that he ſpoke, and, notwithwithſtanding my entreaties, entered into a detail of facts; he was not attended to. His feeble voice was ſtifled by the clamours of the old devotees, friends of Madame de G***, and by the deceitful ſtories of the numerous partiſans of Madame du Reſnel and the Duke de Roſmond. It was aſſerted that St. Méran was a *ſhocking man*; that he had played an *odious part* in this buſineſs. The young women in particular inveighed bitterly againſt him. Almoſt every door was ſhut in his face. He was treated no better at court; he was no longer given the *candle-*

ſtick to hold *; neither was he longer invited into the *private apartments* †. I was really afflicted at the injuſtice which St. Méran ſuffered; but my excellent friend bore it with as much philoſophy as pride; he conſoled himſelf with the muſes, or, to ſpeak more correctly, he congratulated himſelf ſincerely on having much more time to cultivate them.

I had long indulged a wiſh to go to Italy; I now determined to undertake without delay, this intereſting journey. I ſet out about the end of the month of May, and I ſpent three whole years in Italy. At the end of that time I returned to France, fully reſolved in future to ſettle in the country. The very day of my arrival in Paris, I learnt that Madame de G * * * was at the point of death in

* The king, on going to bed, named a nobleman of the court to hold a candle while he undreſſed: this was a diſtinguiſhed favour.

† To ſup with the king and the royal family.

conſequence

conſequence of a conſumption; ſhe died two days after. Every one was perſuaded that Madame du Reſnel was heireſs to her property; and Madame du Reſnel herſelf did not doubt it. There was found a will in due form, which the deceaſed had made only two months previous to her death. All the family was aſſembled in order to be preſent at the opening of the will. Madame du Reſnel, *bathed in tears*, was there as well as the others; but how great was her ſurpriſe, and that of the whole company, when the firſt lines of the will declared the Marquis de ***, Madame de G***'s *univerſal legatee!* At this Madame du Reſnel was thunderſtruck; but judge of her confuſion and her rage when ſhe heard the following clauſes read:

" Having the greateſt veneration for " the character of Monſieur du Reſnel, I " appoint him executor of my will, and I " beg him to accept one of my ſnuff-

" boxes,

"boxes, whichever of them he may "chooſe."

"I leave to the Viſcount de St. Méran, "as a ſmall mark of my perfect eſteem, "a diamond worth twenty thouſand "livres."

The reſt of the will, dictated by juſtice and charity, contained a great many other legacies; and in this document, Madame du Reſnel was neither named nor alluded to.

This will made the greateſt noiſe, and irrevocably diſhonoured Madame du Reſnel. It was evident that her aunt had recently diſcovered the truth; and the ſort of reparation which ſhe made St. Méran and me, was a certain proof of it. Thus Madame du Reſnel, fruſtrated in her hopes, and ruined in the public opinion, found herſelf, to increaſe her misfortune, reduced to live on a ſm[illegible]nnuity, which, in her ideas of ſhow [illegible]p, appeared ſcarcely a bare competen[illegible]

As

As ſoon as I was informed of this event, I wrote a note of four lines to Madame du Reſnel to announce to her that I would make an addition of twenty thouſand livres to her annuity. I know not whether this generoſity, which ſhe little expected, gave her the extravagant hope of regaining my affection, but ſhe had the audacity to come to my houſe and to inſiſt on ſeeing me. I was obliged to order her to be told by a *valet-de-chambre* that this attempt appeared to me incomprehenſible, and that I begged her not to renew it. The next day ſhe wrote to me; but I ſent back her letter unopened.

I remained another year in Paris; I ſettled all my affairs, and then I ſet off for Burgundy.

Such, my dear Marquis, is the chain of ſtrange events, through which become at five and thirty a philoſopher to my coſt, I have for ever devoted myſelf to retirement and repoſe. Judge now whether a

reconcilia-

reconciliation between me and Madame du Reſnel is a thing poſſible, or even to be propoſed.

Adieu, haſten to quit the dangerous theatre of falſe pleaſures and depravity. Come back to the abode of innocence and virtue; here the pureſt happineſs awaits you, and you will not find even the image of it where you are. Come and enjoy the firſt fine days of the year. We have yet no foliage; I was complaining of this to Madame d'Erneville, and aſking her whether ſhe was not aſtoniſhed at it. "*No*," ſaid ſhe, "*for my ſpring will not* "*begin this fortnight!*" This affecting reply appriſed me of the period fixed for your return. Ah! do not defer it; come back!

LETTER IV.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to her Husband.*

Erneville, April 19.

I HAVE this moment received your letter, dated the 15th. What! my dear friend, your return is deferred, *and for five or six weeks at leaſt!* we ſhall have been ſeparated near four months; *a third of the year!* Yeſterday too, I was reckoning the days with ſo much pleaſure! this morning too I ſaid when I awoke: *I ſhall ſee him in twelve days!* ..... *next Monday ſe'nnight!* ..... and then comes this melancholy letter! ... Thoſe vexatious affairs! how I hate them! ..... I am very ſure that this delay afflicts you as much as me; don't you experience every thing that I feel?

At

At leaſt do not be uneaſy about my health; it is excellent, I aſſure you; my milk is quite gone, and I am vaſtly well. My little Maurice ſuffers rather from his teeth within theſe two days, but he ſleeps and eats well. He has ſtill improved ſince your departure; he reſembles you amazingly. Dear child, how I love him!

My ſiſter-in-law is here; ſhe is a good and amiable woman; ſhe has a great friendſhip for me; we walk a great deal, we work, we read together; we divert ourſelves with muſic; and the time paſſes as agreeably as it can do in your abſence. Madame de Vordac is to come here next Tueſday. I expect the Chevalier de Celtas to dinner to-morrow. We ſhall go on Sunday to ſpend part of the day at Monſieur du Reſnel's. You ſee that I follow your advice, and that *I am as diſſipated* as you deſire. But though I ſhould not go out, and were I even to be quite alone, could I grow tired? You know how pleaſant it is to me to cultivate thoſe little talents

lents which pleaſe you, and for which I am indebted to our excellent mother, and to your care. I am the pupil of ſentiment, and my happineſs will ever conſiſt in inceſſantly recollecting thoſe dear leſſons which I received, and in following them conſtantly. You, the young tutor of your Pauline, you, my Albert, are you afraid that idleneſs can ever affect her? All that I know, all that I do, reminds me of your favours, and thoſe of my mother! I find in every occupation a delightful remembrance!..... But to *write*, is ſtill what I prefer. I have at length finiſhed the hiſtory of my mother, and of your adoption; I am tolerably ſatisfied with it, although my mother has, through modeſty, retrenched nearly the half of it. Mademoiſelle du Rocher is copying it for my ſiſter-in-law, as *our dear cenſor* ſent it me back; but I keep the original.

Now I am going to write the hiſtory of our infancy, education, and courtſhip, till the birth of Maurice. Oh! what a pleaſure

pleaſure to commit to paper, and to retrace to my eyes ſo many intereſting traits, which are ſo well engraved in my memory! How pleaſant it is thus to open one's heart, and to detail all its feelings!..... When this work is finiſhed, I am ſenſible that I ſhall compoſe others of the ſame kind. My friend, I can, according to my promiſe, very well diſpenſe with reading novels; but I confeſs to you, I believe that I ſhall never be able to diſpenſe with writing them. If I could always chat with you, I ſhould think of them leſs; and yet I ſhould ſtill regret that theſe dear converſations were only fugitive diſcourſes; I ſhould ſtill love to preſerve them, to collect them under a thouſand different forms. For all that I ſhall write, will ever preſent the picture of our hearts, and of our ſentiments; the heroes and heroines of my novels will always be *Albert* and *Pauline*. I ſhall preſent *no contraſts*; I ſhall never know the profligate, becauſe I ſhall never live at court and in the great world;

world; and I ſhall not acquire information on this head by reading; for thoſe odious characters ſuch as we ſee them in books, are abſolutely unnatural, and I find in them no ſort of probability.

Adieu my firſt friend, my tender brother, my huſband, ſhall I ſay too, *my lover?*..... Oh! no; that title of a moment is not made for an affection ſuch as ours! The only names worthy of us are thoſe which we can give each other to the grave, ſince they are to expreſs the unchangeable conſtancy of the ſentiment the moſt pure and the moſt ſacred.

LETTER V.

The ſame to the ſame.

April 20.

THE poſt does not go out to-day; no matter, I muſt write to the friend of my heart; I muſt tell him that we have juſt perceived that Maurice has *two teeth more*, and that he is vaſtly well. On examining his mouth, I felt theſe two dear little teeth, I named you; I called you from a firſt impulſe; but alas! you were not there! and ſighing, I ſat down to my writing deſk. Oh! my friend, without you there is no perfect joy for Pauline!..... I can alone endure troubles; and even if they were really bitter ones, it would be dreadful to me to ſee you feel them, and, to ſpare you the weight of them, I ſhould have

have the courage to conceal them from you; but my happineſs belongs to you, and it is doubled when you ſhare it. It is above all when I experience an agreeable ſenſation that I wiſh for you near me, and that I grieve not to find you there. How cruel is abſence, my friend! it breaks the ſweet ties of ſympathy; at leaſt it ſuſpends all their effects; we no longer feel, we no longer enjoy in concert. When I am congratulating myſelf on a fortunate event, you are making yourſelf uneaſy perhaps; melancholy is painted on your brow, and mine is ſerene! when I am grieving, you are amuſing yourſelf perhaps! There is no longer any harmony between us; this idea is frightful.

You can at leaſt repreſent to yourſelf your Pauline at every inſtant; you know the plan of my day, and I am more exact than ever in obſerving it. This is the only manner that I have of pleaſing myſelf

in

in ſome meaſure under your eyes. You ſee me drawing, playing on the harp; your imagination can follow me when walking, in the morning, in that garden filled with monuments of our friendſhip; that garden which we have ſeen thrive together, which we have both cultivated in the peaceful days of our infancy; and in the evening, you ſee me in that charming wood where we have gathered lillies of the valley, violets, and ſtrawberries, where your hand has made ſo many noſegays, ſo many crowns for Pauline; where you gave me the firſt leſſons of botany! . . . . And I, I cannot repreſent to myſelf the apartment, nor even the city which you inhabit! I never was at Paris but in my childhood. . . . . Your pleaſures even are unknown to me; I have no idea of the public places, and above all of the opera. At leaſt, ſince your return is deferred, ſend me the plan of your room; I know already that

the

the furniture in it is blue; but I wiſh to be perfectly acquainted with its whole arrangement. Do not forget to mention the place where you write to me; draw me this plan in miniature, ſo that it may be contained in a letter without being folded.

I forgot to anſwer the poſtſcript in your laſt letter, in which you aſk me for my commiſſions. You will do me a pleaſure by bringing me new muſic, eſpecially pretty romances, and likewiſe ſome crayons, and an aſſortment of ſilk for embroidering. As for millinery, chooſe me ſome that is to your taſte; you know whom I would wiſh to pleaſe, and for whom alone I love to dreſs.

My ſiſter-in-law has ſhewn me the pretty letter which ſhe has received from you. I am not yet accuſtomed to ſee you give to any other than myſelf the title of *ſiſter*; it ſeems to me always that it is an

infidelity that you commit towards me. This title is ſo dear to me! it was our firſt tie! You know how ſtrange it appeared to me, in the beginning of our marriage, to call Monſieur d'Orgeval *brother*; but in ſhort he is yours, that is a good reaſon; whereas Deniſe is not my ſiſter. Do not, on that account, think I am jealous. Oh! never, never! one of the great charms of the ſentiment that I feel for you, is a perfect ſecurity, which nothing in the world can diſturb. Who can know you and love you like me?.... And has not the being we love the moſt the happy right to rely on a preference?

Adieu, my real brother, my Albert; when you write to me, enter fully into particulars. One of the circumſtances that gives me the moſt uneaſineſs, is, that every thing that ſurrounds you is unknown to me. Uncertainty is odious when you are concerned. I would wiſh to be able

to

to repreſent to myſelf your ſtreet, your houſe, the ſtaircaſe which you paſs every day, as I repreſent to myſelf that gray coach lined with green, which you preferred, becauſe Pauline's cypher was, by chance, painted on the pannels!....

A-propos, I inform you that till your return, I ſhall be conſtantly dreſſed in the following manner: a white muſlin gown, a ſaſh of lilac ribband; a large lawn neck-handkerchief; nothing on my head; my hair plaited and turned up with a comb; and when I go out, a ſtraw hat. I need not ſay that I ſhall always wear on my neck that medallion, the value of which is increaſed by abſence! Such is the arrangement of Pauline's perſon; as for that of her *mind*, I have no occaſion to deſcribe it to you: to think of you, bleſs providence, appreciate my happineſs, and thank heaven for it; theſe are my ſentiments and my thoughts; you know them, you

ſhare them!.... But more happy than you, I have no affairs; nothing diverts me from my felicity; I am yours in every moment of my life. How preferable is the lot of women to that of men; they have to attend only to the duties of ſentiment! This, no doubt, is what has led people to imagine that Nature has given them more ſenſibility; I am more juſt towards your ſex, dear Albert; you know how to love as well as I; but you have more courage. Far from being humiliated at your ſuperiority, I am proud of it; ſo pleaſant it is to me to admire you, that I find an inexpreſſible charm in acknowledging how much I am inferior to you in every thing.

Adieu, I quit you in order to ſpeak of you, that is to ſay, to write the hiſtory of Pauline and Albert.

LETTER VI.

From the DUKE DE ROSMOND *to the* COUNT DE POLIGNI.

Moulins, April 20.

YES, my dear Poligni, Moulins is tolerably agreeable quarters. In general, the women here are pretty, and it is a very fine ſporting country. My outſet in this town was extremely unpropitious; the dread of my name induced all the mothers and all the huſbands to ſhut their doors againſt me. With reſpect to the young married women, I believe that my reputation inſpired them with more curioſity than fright. All women are naturally fond of profligate *fellows:* is it in the hope of converting or ſurpaſſing them? that is a grand queſtion, at leaſt very

doubtful, and which I will not decide. Be this as it may, the intendant's hotel here was my only refuge for upwards of a fortnight. The intendant is rather amiable for a *lawyer*; his wife, a woman about thirty, has a little clear voice, all the manners of the Parisian ladies of the law, and she piques herself on loving her husband, a thing which I never oppose at her time of life, and with her turn of mind. In this house I saw the first company in Moulins; I caused a profound astonishment; people looked for the behaviour and the conversation of the *petits maîtres* described by Crebillon and Marmontel; they were vastly surprised to see me unaffected and polite, in short a *good sort of man*; we are under great obligation, my dear Poligni, to authors, who, never having lived in the great world, have the presumption to describe it; thanks to their fantastical portraits, we can make dupes as long as we please, especially in the country.

country. No one having our true *deſcription*, who would be able to miſtruſt and recognize us?

I at firſt gained over all the old women; according to the rules of the art, this is the way to begin. I play with them at *quadrille* and at *ombre*; and they aſſert that I am *the moſt ſolid* man in the world. In ſhort every prepoſſeſſion is done away, and my ſucceſs has been ſuch, that I begin to be more fatigued than intoxicated by my fame. But I have a grand project which I am going to execute very ſhortly. There exiſts, twenty miles from this town, a young woman of faſhion, beautiful, it is ſaid, as an angel, and whoſe name is the Marchioneſs d'Erneville. She is ſeventeen, and *adores* her huſband; this huſband is in Paris, the mother is ninety miles off in a convent. Circumſtances, as you ſee, appear favourable. However there are ſome difficulties; this young woman ſees only her relations and old friends; the

officers in quarters, even the *colonels*, are unmerciſully excluded. So much the better:

L'aiguillon de l'amour eſt la difficulté *.

A-propos, do you know that that poor devil du Reſnel is alſo in this province? *He lives like a philoſopher*, that is to ſay, like a bear, on a ſmall eſtate forty or fifty miles from this place. He is ſtill an *amateur* of pictures; but I imagine that *Magdalens* are for ever baniſhed from his collections. Can you conceive that a man ſhould renounce the world and bury himſelf thus quite alive, becauſe his wife has taken a lover?

Madame du Reſnel ſtill writes to me, from time to time, letters perfectly ridiculous. Her complaints are very unjuſt; I will gladly remain her friend; but love *is not to be commanded:* the ties of *eſteem* are henceforth the only ones that can unite us. In truth, I never was conſtant to any

* Difficulty is the ſpur of love. *La Ménardière.*

woman, except herſelf. Our connexion laſted near five years. As long as Madame de G* * * lived, Madame du Reſnel protected, cried up, and admired by all the devotees of the court, was a very ſingular being and a very engaging miſtreſs; but ſince the period of that curſed will, I muſt acknowledge that ſhe is become a very common perſonage.

Adieu, my dear Poligni; tell me if there be ſtill a talk of a promotion of brigadier-generals. I hope that at length I ſhall be included in it; the injuſtice that I experience for theſe two years is inconceivable, and this is what we feel warmly at two and thirty; for when our taſtes and ſentiments are exhauſted, ambition becomes a ſort of reſource.

LETTER VII.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to her Mother the* COUNTESS D'ERNEVILLE.

May 12.

MY dear mother, there happened to us yeſterday an adventure that I muſt relate to you.

At ſeven o'clock in the evening we were all aſſembled in the ſaloon, our good rector, my ſiſter-in-law, Mademoiſelle du Rocher and myſelf. A ſervant came to tell us that a carriage with poſt-horſes was broken down, and had been overturned a hundred yards from the avenue; that the maſter of the carriage, very much hurt, ſent to beg for aſſiſtance. On this, I gave orders to our ſervants to run quickly to the avenue, and the rector went thither with

with them. Half an hour after, we ſaw the rector reappear, followed by the poor ſtranger who put us into a great fright, for his clothes were quite bloody; the windows of his carriage are broken, he has hurt his neck and leg, he has an arm bruiſed, and he limps; in ſhort, he is in a lamentable plight. Fortunately his face has eſcaped. The rector, who, of his own accord, brought him to us, preſented him to me, ſaying: "Madam, this is the "Duke de Roſmond whoſe poſtilions "have loſt their way, and whoſe carriage, "overturned on the bank of the great "pond, is broken to pieces; he poſitively "would not come to requeſt your hoſpi-"tality; but I thought that you would be "delighted to offer it to him." Inſtead of anſwering this harangue, I inquired into the ſituation of the wounded gentleman, who then began to ſpeak, in order to diſpel our alarms in this reſpect, and to expreſs to us, with much grace and politeneſs the fear which he felt of being trouble-

ſome to us. I own that, in Albert's abſence, I ſhould have wiſhed to be able civilly to diſpenſe with admitting him; but I had ſent my horſes and carriage to Luzi to the Chevalier de Celtas and Madame Regnard, who were to come and dine with us the next day. I had almoſt forgot to tell you that of the two horſes harneſſed to the Duke's chaiſe, one broke his traces, fell into the pond, from the prodigious height of the cauſeway, and, for want of help, was drowned; the other is very much hurt. Really this accident might have been fatal, and makes me ſhudder. I might have offered oxen to go as far as Parey, for the Duke de Roſmond was going to Autun; but the carriage was from home, and I was told that the Duke's was ſo broken that it would require at leaſt three or four days to mend it. Beſides, it was quite dark, and the road from here to Parey is dreadful; ſo I was abſolutely obliged to offer the Duke de Roſmond a ſupper and a lodging

lodging for the night. However, not wiſhing that he ſhould remain longer, I informed him, that I would immediately ſend an expreſs to one of my neighbours, Monſieur du Reſnel, to beg him to lend me his horſes and carriage the next morning. The Duke poſitively refuſed this offer, ſaying, that he would ſet off on horſeback the next day, that he would hire a horſe in the village, and that the poſtilion who had driven him, would ſerve him as a guide.

The Duke de Roſmond is not a young man; but he is ſtill very handſome; he has the moſt gentleman-like, and the moſt agreeable manners. His ſimplicity is extreme, and full of grace. I imagined, that courtiers were far more brilliant; but I did not fancy them ſo amiable. He is quartered with his regiment at Moulins, and he was going to Autun ſolely for the purpoſe of ſeeing the antiquities there, which has charmed Mademoiſelle du Rocher, who is *not a little proud that her native town*

ſhould

ſhould receive the honour of ſuch a viſit. As for me, dear mamma, I was horribly uncomfortable all this evening, and for a reaſon which you will never gueſs; it is, that the preſence of this *great lord* (to uſe Mademoiſelle du Rocher's expreſſion) gave all the inhabitants of the caſtle an affectation perfectly ſtrange. Firſt, all my ſervants were as ſcared as if there had popped in on us twenty ſtrangers at a time. They did not know what they were at; they came, went, ran againſt each other, and quarrelled; I never ſaw any thing like it.

I had immediately whiſpered my orders to put Monſieur du Roſmond into the room, furniſhed with printed calico, in the little pavilion. Mademoiſelle Jacinthe thought that it was improper to make *a Duke* croſs two courts, and, in conſequence, ſhe came into the ſaloon to whiſper to me, that certainly *La Pierre had made a miſtake* in giving her that order

from

from me. I diſmiſſed her very drily. Mademoiſelle du Rocher diſappeared, ſhe returned a moment after, and there was a long *whiſpering* between her and my ſiſter-in-law. After this conference, Mademoiſelle du Rocher approached me, in order to repreſent to me in a whiſper, *that it would be more proper to put the Duke into the blue damaſk room.* I repeated peeviſhly, what I had already ſaid twice, and Mademoiſelle du Rocher retired in high dudgeon. At the expiration of a few minutes, La France and La Pierre croſſed the ſaloon carrying a large arm-chair which they had taken from the green cabinet. I aſked what this was for? They anſwered me, that this chair was to be conveyed *into the Duke's room.* Mademoiſelle du Rocher ſtill continued her goings and comings, running out, and returning inceſſantly, and notwithſtanding my orders, and all my impatience, the ſupper was delayed for two long hours. But this is

not all; figure to yourſelf, my dear mother, what was my ſurpriſe, when, on entering the dining room, I ſaw it illuminated as it was on my wedding-day! The luſtre, the girandoles, the branches, all were lighted; for five perſons that we were, the table was laid for thirty, in order to diſplay the beautiful epergne, and the charming china, which you gave us. . . . . I was really in a paſſion; Mademoiſelle du Rocher, with that *air modeſtly triumphant*, which ſhe has on certain occaſions, rubbed her hands, looking towards *the Duke*, to ſee the effect that this brilliant diſplay produced on him. I expreſſed my diſpleaſure in the calmeſt manner that I could aſſume, and very coolly led the company back into the ſaloon, where I gave orders for laying a ſmall table, on which we ſupped. Mademoiſelle du Rocher was exceedingly mortified; but the Duke had ſeen the illumination, and the beautiful epergne; this was a great conſolation. The ſupper was not more

agree-

agreeable to me. Our good rector, abſorbed in the profound reſpect inſpired him by a *Duke and peer of the realm*, durſt neither ſpeak nor eat. Mademoiſelle du Rocher dealt out phraſes and compliments inconceivable; and I will own to you, my dear mamma, that my ſiſter-in-law appeared to me full as ridiculous. The deſire of pleaſing abſolutely ſpoils her amiable temper, and never have I ſeen her ſo affected. She laviſhed on me extraordinary careſſes, coming every minute to embrace me, or to play me ſome little trick.

During all ſupper ſhe was continually in a roar of laughter, underſtanding fineſſe in every thing, recollecting by-words and pleaſantries, which Monſieur de Roſmond could not comprehend, repeating conſtantly, *my ſiſter knows very well what I mean*; *my ſiſter underſtands me very well!* ..... She alſo laughed a great deal, and with very little propriety, at the compliments of Mademoiſelle du Rocher, and

wiſhing to avoid her inſipidity, and to diſplay more eaſe, ſhe fell into the contrary extreme, and was deficient in common politeneſs. My coolneſs, and ſerious air, could not make her aſſume a better manner, and ſhe occaſioned me the whole evening the moſt diſagreeable embarraſſment that I ever experienced in my life. As Monſieur du Roſmond appears to love the fine arts, I have adviſed him to turn three miles out of his road to-morrow, in order to go to Gilly, and ſee the cabinet of Monſieur du Reſnel, who certainly would ſhew him with pleaſure his very intereſting collection. ..... Mademoiſelle du Rocher interrupted me to ſay, that no doubt, Monſieur du Reſnel would think it a great honour to receive *the Duke*; but that certainly *the Duke* had ſeen *curious cabinets, though in a very different ſtyle* to that of Monſieur du Reſnel. On this, my ſiſter-in-law began to joke Mademoiſelle du Rocher on her inclination for Monſieur Remi;

Remi; and the burſts of laughter, and the *private* alluſions were introduced with increaſed perſeverance. I was really on thorns, and I ſaw the ſupper conclude with inexpreſſible pleaſure. I abridged it exceedingly, for a *feaſt* had been prepared in great form, and I gave orders for every thing to be ſet on the table at once; but I could not avoid the *courſe of ices*, becauſe, I had neither ordered nor foreſeen it. On riſing from table, I immediately gave the ſignal for retiring. Monſieur de Roſmond was conducted to the little new pavilion, and I went to my own room, where I ſcolded every one, my footmen, Jacinthe, and even Mademoiſelle du Rocher. I did not venture to ſay any thing to Deniſe; but, in ſpite of myſelf, I was cool with her. To-day, at nine o'clock in the morning, we aſſembled to breakfaſt in the green cabinet. I had, on my knees, my little Maurice, whom Monſieur de Roſmond thought a charming boy; after breakfaſt

we

we went into the garden, and Monſieur du Roſmond aſking me the explanation of the *buildings*, and of the myſterious inſcriptions, I bluſhed exceſſively..... I neither ought, nor will conceal anything from my mother, from my friend, and I will entruſt her with a littleneſs, which I can communicate *to her alone*..... I bluſhed, becauſe I thought, that a courtier, a man who has ſpent his life at Paris, and at Verſailles, would conſider very ridiculous all thoſe monuments of conjugal affection; I bluſhed at what conſtitutes my happineſs and my glory, I bluſhed at virtue! ..... If I had this falſe ſhame, this unworthy emotion with a ſtranger who was paſſing, and whom I ſhall never ſee again, what effect muſt be produced by the habitual ſociety of thoſe people who diſdain the moſt ſacred ſentiments of nature, or who think that it is bad taſte to ſhew them, and to take a pride in them? Ah! dear mamma, how much you were in the right to require from your

Albert

Albert and your Pauline, to ſettle for ever in that cheriſhed ſpot which gave them birth, far from the great world, and from corruption, in that fortunate aſylum, where every thing reminds them of your leſſons, your virtues, and your favours!..... Beſides, my heart immediately diſavowed this ſentiment, ſo little worthy of your daughter and pupil; I gave an explanation of the *buildings*, with much more detail than I ſhould have done but for this *vile bluſhing*; I am ſure, that I had a proud air; I took a pleaſure in conquering the reſpect, the moſt ſhameful to human nature; it ſeemed to me, that in telling all theſe things to a *courtier*, I was courageouſly braving the depravity of the court and the town. During all this time, my ſiſter-in-law ſneered, burſt out a laughing, and appeared to ridicule me; but Monſieur de Roſmond liſtened to me attentively, and in truth, I believe, that he was affected.

After

After having ſtrolled about the park, we went into the delightful little garden of the *two female friends*. O! there it was that my pride very naturally increaſed! I related the principal traits of your hiſtory, and of Albert's birth; we were ſeated under the *ſacred ſhade* of the two weeping willows! ..... I aſſure you, that Monſieur de Roſmond was deeply affected: Ah! who would not be ſo in liſtening to ſuch a tale! .....

The arrival of the Chevalier de Celtas and Madame Regnard, put an end to this converſation; we returned to the caſtle, and in the courſe of half an hour, we ſat down to table. My ſiſter-in-law, who was extremely reſerved in the garden of the *two female friends*, reſumed at dinner the ton, and the airs of the preceding day; ſhe joined to theſe, beſides, a familiarity, which I never ſaw her diſplay with the Chevalier de Celtas; ſhe was placed between him and Monſieur de Roſmond, and

ſhe

ſhe really had the looks and the manners of the moſt extravagant coquette.

The Chevalier appeared to be leſs at his eaſe than uſual; I believe, that he was kept a little in awe by Monſieur de Roſmond. He ſcarcely affected to notice him, yet he talked of nothing but Paris and the court, and of his *old friends*; he did not chooſe to be taken for a man who has never quitted the country. At the ſame time, he endeavoured to diſplay ſome wit, but the humour was wanting; never has he appeared to me ſo unamiable. As for poor Madame Regnard, ſhe was quite put out of countenance, and ſhe made me terribly aſhamed on ſitting down to table, becauſe, in anſwering a compliment of the Duke de Roſmond, ſhe called him *Monſeigneur*.

A quarter of an hour after dinner, the Duke de Roſmond ſet off on horſeback, leaving us all charmed with him, with the exception of

of the Chevalier, who does not think he has *any point in his wit*, and who aſſerts, that he has the reputation of being a coxcomb, and a very dangerous man. I defended him on the ſcore of ſelf-conceit, and every one was of my opinion, for it is impoſſible to be more unaffected, and leſs preſuming. He has done a very handſome thing; the rector went to ſee him this morning in his room. Monſieur de Roſmond wiſhed to deliver to him fifteen louis for the poor of the pariſh. The rector, through a delicacy which I approve, ſaid it was *repugnant to his feelings* to receive this money *himſelf*; he poſitively refuſed, ſaying, that the beneficence of Monſieur d'Erneville was ſufficient for the wants of the poor; but I have learned this evening from the rector, that Monſieur de Roſmond, on quitting the caſtle, went to the church, in order to depoſit there the fifteen louis in the poor's box. This action

is very noble. Bating a few particulars, I have given an account of all this to our Albert, to whom I have juſt written.

I expect Madame de Vordac in a few days. That excellent and dear friend will indemnify me for the anxiety which my ſiſter-in-law has cauſed me ſince yeſterday. Yet Deniſe is good and amiable: in general, I attribute her little whims only to the want of education. If ſhe had a mother like mine, ſhe would, perhaps, be far leſs imperfect than your Pauline; but I feel that ſhe will never inſpire me with the ſentiment which I have for a female friend of my infancy, who is dear to you, and who has ſo much underſtanding, and ſo many virtues. Madame de Vordac will always be *my ſecond female friend*; and could I, beſides, wiſh for a third?

Adieu, dearly-beloved mother! imagine with what impatience I expect Albert, ſince I am to go and meet him at Dijon, and I ſhall enjoy the double happineſs of

finding myſelf, at the ſame time, in your arms and his.

LETTER VIII.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to* MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL.

Gilly, May 13.

WHILE you are at Dijon, my dear d'Orgeval, great ſcenes are paſſing at Erneville. I dined there yeſterday, and found there, *quite at home*, the Duke de Roſmond, colonel of the regiment de ***, which is quartered at Moulins. I was well acquainted with his family in Paris; his father was killed at the battle of ***; his mother, a woman of great gallantry, died about eight or nine years ago, and left only this ſon, and a daughter conſiderably younger than her brother. As for the Duke, he is a man about thirty, and, though

though very handſome in point of perſon, is by no means brilliant in company; but whom, it is ſaid, no woman has hitherto reſiſted. With your penetration, you would certainly have been greatly amuſed yeſterday at Erneville caſtle; you would have ſeen *the gentle Pauline*, with her little ingenuous coquetry, anſwering *candidly* the expreſſive looks of the Duke; the *heavenly ſmile* was often on her lips; as for what was in her heart, I know not, and I believe that, in truth, no one knows rightly. Mademoiſelle du Rocher was more *loquacious* than ever, and rubbed her hands beyond meaſure. The fat Madame Regnard bluſhed, was diſconcerted, and loſt in amazement. Madame d'Orgeval ſneered from time to time with much fineſſe, and the Duke ſaw and heard only the young and pretty lady of the houſe. You will aſk me how, notwithſtanding the prohibitions of the *dearly-beloved brother*, *of the adored huſband*, ſhe could thus admit a *colo-*

nel, a *duke*, a coxcomb, a real *Lothario?* What! do you not divine that his carriage broke down in the avenue? Would you have the tender-hearted Pauline refuſe to receive a wounded hero, handſome as Adonis? Would you have the pupil of the *ſublime Counteſs*, barbarous, *inhuman?* This is by no means her character; and if the *Marquis*, your brother, takes it into his head to be angry, ſhe will prove to him that he has not common ſenſe, becauſe *the abſent are always in the wrong*.

I went laſt night to ſleep at du Reſnel's. It is a droll circumſtance, that when I related to him the *chance* viſit of the Duke de Roſmond, he could not help making up a diabolical face; and the philoſopher, from that moment, became more abſent and more ſilent than ever. Was I wrong when I told you that he was madly in love with the Marchioneſs?

Adieu, my dear d'Orgeval, I ſet out to-morrow for Autun. Henceforth addreſs thither your letters.

I have

I have no ſmall curioſity to ſee how *the great Albert* will take all this; when you know, write me word.

LETTER IX.

From the DUKE DE ROSMOND *to the* COUNT DE POLIGNI.

May 15.

I AM concealed in a cottage, eighteen miles from Erneville, and I cannot paſs my time more agreeably than in writing to you, my dear Poligni.

I have ſeen her, I have ſpent with her an evening and a morning. Ah, Poligni! how charming ſhe is! She has not the ſtriking and regular beauty that Madame du Reſnel poſſeſſed; but I never ſaw ſo many graces united: a nobleneſs, an elegance, a bloom; a natural modeſty, a

candour ſo intereſting; a ſmile inexpreſſibly charming, a tone of voice that finds its way to the very bottom of the heart: in ſhort, ſhe is a truly raviſhing creature.

You will laugh at me; no matter: I muſt acknowledge it, Poligni; I quitted her, not only without having made a declaration; but without having dared to give her the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion of my ſentiments, and I am as amorous as a madman; add, if you will, as a fool. I admit it. She has made me timid; why ſhould ſhe not make me humble? I know but one woman that can be compared to her for graces, and for perſon; that is, my ſiſter: but Madame d'Erneville joins to the ſame candour, to the ſame charms, far more quickneſs, and an underſtanding infinitely better cultivated. I repeat it, ſhe has turned my brain. I am aſhamed of it, I am irritated at it.... At my age, after ſo many brilliant ſucceſſes, if I were to fail with a child, a coun-

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try girl of ſeventeen !..... But, Poligni, all thoſe women that we have ſubdued, we underſtood how to go to work to ſeduce them; the way was known: it was neceſſary by turns to flatter and teaze them; the whole ſecret conſiſted in intereſting or piquing their vanity; here it is quite another thing. I find myſelf entirely at a loſs; I am an abſolute novice in the art of gaining a feeling, innocent, and pure heart, joined to the moſt delicate and moſt enlightened mind. Have we ever ſeen any thing like it?....., Yet there is a point in which all pretty women reſemble each other; they love every thing that appears to them extraordinary and romantic; and I ſaw that Pauline was not exempt from this paſſion.

For my own private information, I have never failed to aſk the women who have loved me, what was the thing that had principally decided them in my favour; and I have conſtantly diſcovered from their

anſwers that it was always the raſheſt and maddeſt action, and conſequently that which could moſt expoſe their reputation. Flights of fancy, imprudences, diſguiſes enchant them; they ſeek, eſpecially in love, the incidents and materials of a romance; and the women the leaſt corrupted are in this way the moſt *adventurous*.

I have already been cruelly diſappointed in my attempt. Would you believe that arriving hurt, limping, maimed, with a carriage broken to pieces, a horſe drowned, &c. the fair one had the cruelty to diſmiſs me the next day on a ſorry hack? I reckoned to paſs there five or ſix days; vain hope!..... Nevertheleſs, I have not quite loſt my time, I have gained over the favourite *femme-de-chambre*, one Jacinthe, as tractable as her miſtreſs is innocent. In order to diſcover, without expoſing myſelf, the character of the maid, I had commiſſioned Brunel, my outrider, to make love to her: he told

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me that ſhe *would do very well:* it remained for me to know how far her diſintereſtedneſs might lead. As ſhe fulfils in the manſion the duties of houſe-keeper, ſhe came naturally into my room in the morning. I chatted with her, and told her that I had a young ſiſter for whom I wiſhed to provide a *governeſs*; but that the corruption of Paris was ſuch, that I wiſhed for a perſon from the country; I added, that I ſhould be happy to find one who had the manners, language, and education of Mademoiſelle Jacinthe; and I aſked her whether ſhe had a female relation or a friend, whom ſhe could recommend. I did not forget to ſay that I would give fifty louis a year to this *governeſs*, and that my ſiſter would live at Paris in my houſe. I ſaw clearly from the aſtoniſhed air of Mademoiſelle Jacinthe that ſhe was longing to propoſe herſelf; and after ſome preamble, this is what ſhe actually did. I anſwered her

that I pledged my word to take her into my houſe, and to ſecure to her, *for life*, an annuity of twelve hundred livres, if ſhe would do me a ſervice to which I attached the greateſt value. I then took the liberty of offering her, *on account*, thirty louis, which ſhe received with as much joy as aſtoniſhment. I afterwards confided to her my paſſion for the Marchioneſs, aſſuring her that my ſentiments were *very pure*, and that I aſpired only to the happineſs of being loved. Mademoiſelle Jacinthe, on her ſide, proteſted to me that, but for this aſſurance, ſhe would certainly not engage to ſerve me; but that ſhe could not *ſuſpect* the honor of *a nobleman ſuch as me*. After having thus put *our principles* under ſhelter, and quieted our conſciences, I queſtioned this girl, who told me that the Marchioneſs felt for her huſband no more than friendſhip; that ſhe abſolutely experienced for him only the ſentiment that a woman has for a brother;

ther; and this my own obſervations have confirmed. There is a great motive of hope. It is ſaid, however, that this happy huſband is young, witty, and handſome; and ſince he was brought up with Pauline, no doubt his converſation and manners are agreeable; but, in ſhort, his wife is not in love..... and nothing appears to me leſs ſurpriſing. Thoſe who have been brought up together, and who know each other from infancy, are never really fond lovers. We call *love* a tender ſentiment between two perſons of a different ſex, who feel no other; but this pretended love, born from infancy, is no more than friendſhip. Love, without enthuſiaſm, cannot ſubſiſt in a long intimacy, which parches up the charm of perfections, and neceſſarily makes known defects inſeparable from human nature.

We are enraptured with heroes and great men as long as we have not lived

under their roof; we fancy them in every thing ſuperior to human nature, for enthuſiaſm reaſons thus; but on ſeeing them near at hand, we are undeceived, and we grow cool. It is the ſame in love: the objects we admire have no defects, they are perfect beings, ſingular beings; we think ſo till we have paſſed ſix months, or, by an impoſſibility, a year or two, in ſeeing them every hour and under no reſtraint. Accordingly, (even for the *moſt ſentimental dupes*,) there is no durable paſſion but an unfortunate paſſion, which has left only the poſſibility of getting a glimpſe of our object.

Poets have been to blame to give Love a *bandeau*; he is not blind, but he ſees only by halves; he wiſhes to look only to admire, and who can admire with infatuation in ſeeing all? Love is an enchanting dream, produced by the imagination alone; it cannot diſpenſe with illuſion; it embraces with tranſport nothing but

chimeras: the more mad it is in its expectation, the more it is violent and ſublime; and becauſe it is infinite in its hopes, it is nothing in reality.

Myſtery, fears, and obſtacles, being neceſſary to love, how can it ſubſiſt between two perſons united by an indiſſoluble tie? And, indeed, we ſee that it laſts between lovers who marry, only when one of the two gives the other lively uneaſineſs; perfect tranquillity accords but with friendſhip, it annihilates love. Do you not find me very learned on this ſubject? for hitherto I have had, in this reſpect, leſs theory than practice; but this heavenly creature has occaſioned me to make a crowd of new reflections; ſhe is not formed to be loved only for a moment. The eſtate of ***, thirty miles from hers, is to be ſold; I will purchaſe it; my project is not to bury myſelf in it; but I will go thither often. Poligni, I am tired of intrigue and vice; I am determined to

reſt

reſt myſelf *in the arms of virtue:* is not this a laudable intention? .....

You wiſh to know my plan; it is on the grand ſcale; nothing more romantic: here it is:

Prompted by Jacinthe, I am to wait here till the Marchioneſs is to be quite alone again in her caſtle. She expects a Madame de Vordac, her intimate friend, who is to remain with her till the firſt of May; afterwards ſhe will be alone for at leaſt a week. Then under the dreſs of a ſoldier of the regiment of * * *, quartered at Chalons, I ſhall repair to the foreſt of Erneville, within three quarters of a mile of the caſtle; there, is a hermit revered in the diſtrict, whoſe hoſpitality I ſhall requeſt for a few days, ſaying that I am going to join my regiment, and that I am overcome by fatigue, &c. You muſt know that the Marchioneſs ſleeps on the ground flour; that her cabinet looks towards the garden; that if the weather is

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at all fine ſhe leaves the door of it open; that every one in the caſtle is in bed by ten or eleven o'clock; that the Marchioneſs ſits up alone to write till midnight and later; that ſhe loves moonlight (a circumſtance that delights me), and that if the ſky is ſerene, ſhe leaves her writing deſk from time to time, and goes to meditate in the garden. Jacinthe will come on a morning to walk in the foreſt before the Marchioneſs is awake. I have agreed with her on certain ſignals, by which I ſhall be appriſed of the favourable day..... I have the key of a ſmall door of the garden; but I ſhall maintain that I *ſcaled* the wall, which is far more affecting, eſpecially as it is of a prodigious height. Introduced into the park, I ſhall not attempt to enter the cabinet; there, my charmer would have bells, and I muſt expect a ſtormy reception..... Beſides, I will not loſe the advantage of *moon-light*..... When I arrive at half paſt

paſt eleven, probably ſhe will be writing to her huſband; ſhe will have juſt been renewing the oath of an inviolable fidelity..... Is there not a ſublime audacity in chooſing ſuch a moment? and if ſucceſs crowns my temerity, will not this exploit eclipſe all the reſt?

I have full leiſure for terminating this adventure. My lieutenant-colonel ſupplies my place at Moulins, and I have obtained leave of abſence for a month, *in order to travel* in the province.

Adieu, my dear Poligni, I ſhall write to you no more till I quit the hermitage. I have ſome happy ſurmiſes: will they, for the firſt time, deceive me?

LETTER X.

From the COUNTESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* MARCHIONESS *her Daughter.*

Dijon, May 18.

YOUR letter, my dear child, deſcribes admirably the effect that a *court lord* produces in general on country people. This deſcription made me laugh; it is pleaſant and true. However, I am ſorry that the Duke de Roſmond was admitted for a moment under the roof of my Pauline, for the Chevalier de Celtas is in the right for this once; all that he told you of him is a fact; the Duke de Roſmond has ruined an infinite number of women, and he is reckoned the moſt depraved nobleman about court. This will diſpleaſe my ſon, I am ſure; perhaps he will think that you

you ought not to have kept this ſtranger to dinner the next day. Albert knows you perfectly, ſo he eſteems you as much as he loves you; but he has, in his diſpoſition, a ſort of reſtleſsleſs which requires great management: I will venture to ſpeak out, (Pauline will not be terrified,) he is miſtruſtful. This defect is excuſable; it is owing only to his modeſty and his extreme ſenſibility; he is naturally inclined to melancholy; he is diſturbed, he is affected ſo eaſily: do you remember all his chimerical ſorrows, during the three months that preceded your marriage; what difficulty we had to perſuade him that *obedience alone* did not induce you to marry him! How often did he then repeat to me that, but for my affection for him, you would, perhaps, have preferred the Chevalier de Celtas. Was it not carrying modeſty to a ridiculous exceſs, to imagine, in good earneſt, that it was poſſible to prefer to him the Chevalier de Celtas?

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and when I retraced to him all the proofs of affection which you had conſtantly given him; "Yes, no doubt," ſaid he, "ſhe loves me, *but only as a brother.*" I replied, that ſuch a ſentiment was a thouſand times preferable to love. "I "believe it," reſumed he, ſighing; "but "Pauline has ſo lively an imagination, "will ſo peaceable a ſentiment always "ſatisfy her?"—I think with you, that it never will be poſſible for Albert to ſuſpect your conduct; but you muſt expect ſometimes to ſee in him ſome ſlight uneaſineſs in regard to your ſentiments. You ſuppoſe in him that perfect confidence, that unalterable ſecurity, which you have yourſelf, and you are miſtaken; your hearts are abſolutely ſimilar; but your diſpoſitions are very different. He has, in general, a very bad opinion of women; his deceaſed father had led, in his youth, a moſt diſſipated life, and related to him (very much againſt

againſt my will) ſome ſcandalous anecdotes and adventures, which made but too much impreſſion on a young man who was then only ſeventeen or eighteen. From that time, the ſtories of the Baron de Vordac have not weakened theſe firſt prepoſſeſſions. Albert is perſuaded that an artful coxcomb will always triumph over the principles of a young woman. Pauline, no doubt, is not comprehended in this rigid and certainly unjuſt opinion; but in ſhort ſhe is a woman, ſhe is young, pretty, ingenuous, and poſſeſſed of ſenſibility; this is enough to inſpire him with vague fears, which his heart in vain diſavows.

What you tell me reſpecting your ſiſter-in-law gives me much concern, but does not aſtoniſh me; ſhe has no great underſtanding, and ſhe is exceſſively vain. Her huſband will not correct in her this latter defect. Live on good terms with theſe two perſons; but never place a confidence

fidence in them. Monſieur d'Orgeval, notwithſtanding the generous behaviour of his brother, and I will venture to ſay mine, cannot get the better of a ſecret envy which has preyed on him from his infancy. He forgives not his brother either his ſuperiority, fortune, or happineſs. All the vices are, in general, more exalted in the great world than in the country, with the exception of envy; this ſhameful paſſion is more violent and more gloomy in a confined circle than in the midſt of great diſſipation. In the country, nothing diverts our attention from it; the opportunities which excite it are inceſſantly revived, and the object of it is always before our eyes.

I will not judge ill of the Chevalier de Celtas, he behaved extremely well at the time of your marriage; however, he has much preſumption; he is greatly addicted to ſlander; and I own to you, beſides, that his intimate connexion with Monſieur d'Orgeval

d'Orgeval makes me ſtrongly ſuſpect him. Be aſſured that the friends of that family will never be ours.

Adieu, dear Pauline, talk to me of your readings, of your occupations. How goes on the little girls' ſchool? How is the good hermit? Are the two *almond-trees* in bloſſom? Talk to me of all thoſe things which bring back to my mind ſuch dear recollections.

A thouſand kind things from me to Madame de Vordac; my compliments to Mademoiſelle du Rocher.

LETTER XI.

From the MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE *to his Wife.*

Paris, May 19.

THE Duke de Roſmond has paſſed four and twenty hours at Erneville caſtle! Pauline has admitted the Duke de Roſmond!..... I own that nothing in the world ever cauſed me more aſtoniſhment.

Have we not ſaid a hundred times, my dear Pauline, that a young woman attached to her reputation ought never to receive the viſits of officers in quarters? Had you not ſolemnly promiſed me that you would not commit ſuch an imprudence? Do not take this for a reproach, it is only the expreſſion of an extreme ſurpriſe.....

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Were you not even ſuch as my heart wiſhes you, I could not but wonder and grieve.

The Duke de Roſmond is no longer young; he is a very amiable man, and by no means preſuming. I know that in fact he is handſome, amiable, and very ſeducing; but I did not know that, at *thirty*, a man was old. As for his *politeneſs*, and his want of *preſumption*, you may judge of it by a letter that I ſend you from Monſieur du Reſnel, containing a hiſtory in which the Duke de Roſmond figures as the principal perſonage. You will ſee whether it be poſſible to carry farther, impoſture, treachery, and villany.

How then can you have been the dupe of a ſtratagem ſo well-known and ſo ſtale? of that carriage broken down in the avenue? This man who pollutes, or profanes, every place where he is admitted, wiſhed to ſee you in the hope of ſeducing you, or in the intention of boaſting of it.

What will he not ſay after having ſpent two days at Erneville, in my abſence, and when I was three hundred miles from you!.....

Dear Pauline, I know your heart and your ſentiments: this is enough for my happineſs and for my peace of mind; but it is in you alone that I have placed my vanity and my pride, and the ſlighteſt attack on your reputation would be to me an indelible ſtain.

Adieu, ſiſter; adieu my ſweet and affectionate friend, my heart is oppreſſed!.... I will not ſuffer you to partake my inſurmountable melancholy!..... Adieu, my Pauline, I will write you a very long letter by the next poſt.

LETTER XII.

The MARCHIONESS's *Anſwer.*

Erneville, May 24.

YOUR heart is oppreſſed! this is all that ſtrikes me in your letter! ..... Oh, my Albert! can this odious adventure have afflicted you! I am then to blame! ..... Ah! forgive me; I am now ſenſible of my imprudence. Yes, I ought to have ſaid that I could not accommodate him; I ought, above all, not to have ſuffered him to ſtay the next day to dinner..... Yet, my dear friend, my fault is not ſo great as you ſay; you muſt have read my letter haſtily, and not have rightly underſtood it. I did not *admit the viſit* of this frightful man; the rector brought him to

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me without having conſulted me on the ſubject. He did not paſs two days at Erneville; he arrived in the evening at half paſt ſeven o'clock, and ſet off the next day at two o'clock in the afternoon, on riſing from table: And then I did not tell you that he was an *old man*; I thought him thirty-ſeven or thirty-eight years of age, and I ſaid that he was no longer in the bloom of youth. I ſee by Monſieur du Reſnel's letter that he is two and thirty; he appears much older: this is quite natural, vice muſt bring on old age! Oh, what an abominable man!..... In that horrible Madame du Reſnel he met with the woman moſt worthy of himſelf. This hiſtory appears to me as incredible as thoſe of the giants and men-eaters. Poor Monſieur du Reſnel! how much he is to be pitied! and with what generoſity he has behaved! but take courage, my affectionate friend! this cannot injure the reputa-

tion of your Pauline; fortunately I had witneſſes of my conduct.....

Oh, what a monſter is this man! I cannot get the better of it, for I aſſure you that he has the air of the moſt perfect propriety. Great God! how happy we are to live far from people capable of ſo many arts of treachery. I will never as long as I live admit ſtrangers, and I will never ſee profligates.

My brother, my Albert, write to me very quickly that you are no longer *oppreſſed!*..... Till the moment I receive a good long letter, O! how heavy will your *oppreſſion* weigh on my heart!

LETTER XIII.

From the ſame to the BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Erneville, May 30.

AH, my dear friend! how great is my confuſion! ..... That monſter whoſe ſcandalous hiſtory you have read,—it is but too true that he came here only with the blackeſt intentions: liſten to a tale that will make you ſhudder.

This morning the good hermit aſked to ſpeak to me in private, and he related to me that a ſoldier, with a yellow and blue uniform, had come to requeſt his hoſpitality, ſaying, that having travelled on foot a long journey, he had ſtrained a ſinew of his leg, that he ſtood in need of ſeveral days' reſt, and that he begged of him an

aſylum; that on ſaying this, he had offered him a crown. The hermit, conſidering that a poor ſoldier, juſt come off a long journey, and having ſtill to go to Chalons, ought not, on ſuch ſlight grounds, to part with a crown, ſurveyed this ſoldier, and immediately gueſſed from the *whiteneſs of his hands*, and from his *complexion*, that he was a man in diſguiſe. In conſequence, he poſitively refuſed to receive him. The ſoldier appeared diſconſolate, and, after having intreated, and even threatened, in vain, offered the hermit a purſe *full of gold* to keep him only *for a week*, telling him another ſtory, *owning* that he was an officer, that he had *fought a duel*, and that he was obliged to conceal himſelf, &c. The hermit perſiſted in his refuſal, and the enraged ſtranger was compelled to go about his buſineſs. Half an hour after, the hermit, who had taken the longeſt road to come hither, becauſe he was afraid of meeting with the ſtranger in the foreſt, fell

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in with him at the entrance of the little village. The ſtranger approached him, and aſked him in a threatening tone, whither he was going; the hermit, doubling his pace, and entering the village, called out to him: "*To Erneville to inform the "Marchioneſs.*" The ſtranger, with a *terrible look*, made a movement, in order to ſpring on him; but at that moment the hermit entered the firſt houſe in the village. In the courſe of an hour the hermit took a companion to come hither, and he ſaw no more of the ſtranger. I did not forget to queſtion him reſpecting the perſon of this ſtranger, and his anſwers have completely confirmed me in my ſuſpicions. The hermit is convinced that this man is the chief of a gang of robbers; he certainly is not miſtaken in taking him for a ruffian and a ſcoundrel. I would wiſh that the truth were not known, for we muſt avoid every thing that can be made a ſtory of, and then an adventure of this kind would

grieve my mother and my huſband. Beſides, Albert, who returns in a month, might go to Moulins to demand of the contemptible author of this infamous plot ſatisfaction for ſuch an inſult! ..... This idea makes me tremble! ..... In conſequence, I told the hermit that his conjecture did not appear to me well founded; that duels between military men were ſo common, that very poſſibly the ſtory related by the ſtranger might be true. "You did very right," added I, "not to "receive him; and if he returns, I deſire "that you perſiſt invariably in this reſo-"lution; but at the ſame time, in "the uncertainty in which you are, you "ought not to divulge this ſtory, becauſe "you would run the riſk of injur-"ing an unfortunate perſon." The good hermit was ſtruck by my reflection; he gave me his word (and it may be relied on) not to ſpeak of all this to any one whatever. We agreed

that

that he ſhould ſay merely that he heard a whiſtling at night in the foreſt, that he was afraid, and that he would reſide in the village for a fortnight.

Certainly *the monſter*, knowing that I am informed of his conduct, will not return to the hermitage; but who knows whether he will not make attempts of another kind!..... Thanks to heaven, I am on my guard! This vague report of thieves, ſpread by the hermit, gives me a right to take uſeful precautions; I will cauſe a *guard to be mounted* every night in the garden, I will relinquiſh my nocturnal rambles, I will make Jacinthe ſleep in my room, I will eſtabliſh La France and La Pierre in the little gallery, and I will not ſtir out in the day unleſs well attended.

Do you conceive, my dear friend, that without paſſion, without any love, a man can do ſuch things? This wretch, when he came here with the project of ſeducing me, had never ſeen me; he knew only

that this caſtle was inhabited by an innocent and happy creature; he knew that two beings, united from their cradle, were here enjoying the pureſt felicity; and, like Satan, he wiſhed to introduce himſelf into *the terreſtrial paradiſe*, in order to baniſh thence virtue and happineſs!..... Ah, my dear friend! I ſee that we are much to blame in attributing to the paſſions, to the feelings, all thoſe ſhameful wanderings which ſo frequently diſturb the order of ſociety; all theſe crimes proceed, not from the heart, but from the head, and from a depraved imagination.

It is with pain that I find myſelf forced to conceal this from my mother and my huſband. This is the firſt time that I have behaved myſteriouſly towards them; but why diſturb or afflict, to no purpoſe, my good and feeling mother, when there is no farther advice to be aſked? As for Albert, I am almoſt ſure that he would ſeek revenge for this indignity; that, beſides, he would

would be in fear for my reputation, for the unexpected viſit even of the odious perſonage diſpleaſed him extremely. O! how ſeverely do I repent having admitted this impoſtor!..... Woe be to ſtrange carriages that may henceforth naturally break down in my avenue! *Elegant travellers* will not find in me, in future, either hoſpitality or politeneſs!

Adieu, my dear friend! I ſend you an expreſs. How happy ſhould I be were you here! O! if you could come back! or elſe if you think that it would not be troubleſome to Monſieur de Vordac, I would ſay that the meaſles are in the village, and that I am in fear for my little Maurice. At your houſe I ſhould be ſo quiet!..... See if you can arrange this. I embrace you from the bottom of my heart.

LETTER XIV.

The BARONESS's *Anſwer to the* MARCHIONESS.

May 30, in the Evening.

GOOD heaven! my dear friend, what a ſurpriſe, and what palpitations of the heart your letter occaſions me!....

Monſieur de Vordac is at Monſieur du Reſnel's, and does not return till to-morrow night. I doubt not that he will be very glad to ſee you arrive at his houſe: but you are acquainted with him; you know that I can *propoſe* nothing without his conſent, and it is ſafer to aſk him by word of mouth than in writing, becauſe his firſt movement is always to refuſe. Therefore, inſtead of writing to him, I am reſolved to wait for his return; but I am certain, my

dear

dear Pauline, that you may come after to-morrow. As ſoon as I have obtained the wiſhed-for *yes*, I will ſend you Simon, who will procure a horſe in paſſing by Monſieur du Reſnel's, who has ſo often thus promoted our correſpondence.

Your whole conduct is proper, and you are mad to reproach yourſelf for having admitted this vile man. Could you do otherwiſe when the rector brought him to you, and he was in your parlour? No, my dear angel, I will not have you be ſo humble and gentle as to aſcribe to yourſelf imaginary faults.

Moſt aſſuredly you muſt conceal this; Albert has a ſublime ſoul, a ſuperior *mind*; but he is eaſily vexed. Your mother, who knows him better than you, has told me a thouſand times that he is naturally miſtruſtful. And then, as you obſerve, a knowledge of the whole truth might occaſion an affair between him and *the infernal ſpirit*.

Apropos,

Apropos, my dear friend; I think it is very poſſible that ſome of your ſervants may be corrupted; every one does not, like the good hermit, refuſe *purſes full of gold.* Are you very ſure of Jacinthe?

Simon is ready, I will not make him wait. Adieu, my angel; O! how I long for Monday!

LETTER XV.

The MARCHIONESS's *Anſwer to the* BARONESS.

May 31.

SIMON wiſhes to go back again in the morning; and although I indulge the hope of ſeeing my friend to-morrow, I will ſtill anſwer her by this very ſafe opportunity, eſpecially as it is poſſible that Monſieur de

de Vordac may keep to his *firſt word*, that is, to a refuſal.

No, my dear friend, my mother *knows not better than I*, Albert's diſpoſition. No one in the world knows Albert ſo well as I do. My mother loves him dearly; yet when ſhe ſays that he is *miſtruſtful*, ſhe is miſtaken; but, in this caſe ſhe rather expreſſes a fear, than pronounces an opinion..... No, no, Albert is too generous to be miſtruſtful. What ſhe takes for miſtruſt is nothing more than delicacy. Never, never will Albert be miſtruſtful of his Pauline; he can no more ſuſpect me than hate me. Our ſouls are ſo blended, that it is impoſſible we can doubt each other for a moment. He watches over my reputation, of which he is the natural guardian; it is his property, it is his honour; his precautions, in this reſpect, prove to me no more than his affection and his prudence: in this he acts only for others; but never will he feel the

ſhadow

ſhadow of uneaſineſs in regard to my intentions and my ſentiments. Though events (which, thanks to heaven, cannot happen) ſhould make me ſeem culpable in his eyes, though all appearances ſhould condemn me, he would divine the error without being able to explain it; and I ſhould be fully juſtified in his opinion before I had ſaid a ſingle word in my defence. This is the manner in which we love each other; ſuch an attachment is proof againſt every thing.

Your reflection reſpecting my ſervants is very juſt; it is very poſſible that the idea of corrupting them may have occurred: but I think them all honeſt, eſpecially thoſe that Albert has given me. As for Jacinthe, ſhe is a virtuous girl, who is ſincerely attached to me, of whom I am perfectly ſure, and who, for all the treaſures in the world, would not connive at an infamous tranſaction.

Adieu,

Adieu, my dear friend; Simon grows impatient, adieu. I hope that he will return to-morrow with a favourable anſwer, and that the obliging Monſieur du Reſnel will lend him a freſh horſe.

LETTER XVI.

From the DUKE DE ROSMOND *to the* COUNT DE POLIGNI.

June 8.

AN incident which I did not expect, was to meet with an incorruptible hermit. I relied on finding a hypocrite: by no means; this devil of a man has taken it into his head to be honeſt and ſtaunch. I was obliged to quit the hermitage in the courſe of a quarter of an hour. I wandered about the foreſt, I ſpent eight and forty hours in a cottage, I had an interview with

with Mademoiſelle Jacinthe, who told me that the Marchioneſs had *doubled her guard*, and poſted ſentinels by night in the garden. She gueſſed the point of attack; this is the diſcernment of a great general. As for the reſt, according to the information of the hermit, ſhe was forced to act on the defenſive; and, notwithſtanding all this ſhow, Jacinthe aſſures me, that ſhe is *ſerious*, thoughtful, and ſighs. Beſides, ſhe has entruſted her ſecret to no one, ſhe has enjoined the hermit to be ſilent, and to ſay merely that he heard *ſome whiſtling in the foreſt*, and that he is afraid of thieves. This does not make mine a deſperate caſe. The Marchioneſs is gone to paſs a few days at her friend's Madame de Vordac, and I have taken up my quarters in a ſmall village two leagues off. Now I am going to write ſome very reſpectful and very romantic letters. Jacinthe dares not, and will not, deliver them herſelf; but ſhe will find means

means to have them delivered. Notwithſtanding theſe unexpected delays, I think the affair in a good train. Had the Marchioneſs ſincerely wiſhed to have got rid of me, ſhe would have told the hermit to make his complaint to the magiſtrate of the ſpot, ſhe would have boldly related this ſtory, and I ſhould have been forced, without delay, to abandon the field of battle. But ſhe holds her tongue, ſhe preſcribes ſilence, ſhe *thinks*, ſhe ſighs!..... She fully ſuſpects that I am in the neighbourhood, ſhe tolerates me there; this is encouraging me, this is expecting me. I imagine that ſhe is gone to her friend's houſe, in order to rid herſelf of the ſuperintendance of a female companion, of a ridiculous duenna, that ſhe has left at the caſtle. All this is not ill contrived.

I ſhall remain here eight or ten days longer; but I ſhall return, and I dare flatter myſelf, under better auſpices. Addreſs your letters to me at Autun; ſend me the inter-

intereſting news, that is to ſay, all the ſcandal of the day. Nothing is leſs rare and leſs curious, I know; but this is common place that never tires.

LETTER XVII.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to* MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL.

Autun, June 16.

I HAVE aſtoniſhing things to relate to you, my dear d'Orgeval, but entirely between ourſelves; for, in truth, this ſurpaſſes pleaſantry, and really I am too much attached to your family to treat certain matters lightly. I can laugh at a few little whims, at a few *little falſehoods*; but I ceaſe to joke as ſoon as the honour is attacked, I do not ſay of my friends, but merely of the

the perſons with whom I have any connexion. It is therefore with concern that I hear all that is reported here againſt your ſiſter-in-law.

The Duke de Roſmond has been a week in this town; he has already ruined here two women, Madame D*** and little C***. It is thought that the latter will *fix him* till his departure, which is announced for the thirtieth of this month. Little C*** relates to whoever will hear her, that the Duke informed her he had ſpent a fortnight diſguiſed as a *mendicant Capuchin* in the environs of *Erneville*, and that he was extremely well ſatisfied with the *hoſpitality* and the *charity* of the lady of the caſtle, whom he found, he ſaid, the moſt *tender-hearted* woman breathing.

This ſtory is in every one's mouth; judge of the ſcoffing. The Duke is a coxcomb, and conſequently he muſt be a liar: I am perſuaded that he boaſts a great deal

too much; but there is ſome truth at *bottom*: this is what cannot be doubted. The Duke totally *diſappeared* for upwards of a fortnight, and his ſervants ſay that he ſpent all this time in the *hermitage of the foreſt*, and at *Malta*. In ſhort, the Duke has very ſeducing perſonal qualifications; and it is certain that he attracted great admiration from the Marchioneſs. We may judge of this by the *ſplendour of the reception* in the evening, of which Madame d'Orgeval gave us ſo pleaſant a deſcription; that *illumination*, that *table of thirty covers*, the *diſplay of the beautiful ſervice of Sève china*, that *wedding-feaſt*, all theſe extraordinary expences prove, at leaſt, that the young brain was a little turned. Yet, we may well ſee, in all this ridiculous ſhow, only a childiſh vanity; but a thing, far leſs childiſh, was the lady's conduct *the next day*. I never ſaw any thing more indecent, and *more clear*, than the expreſſion of the Duke's looks; never was *flower*

of the fields ſo pretty and ſo freſh; and notwithſtanding that natural colour ſo extolled, it was evidently ſeen that an artificial *rouge* ſtill heightened its luſtre. Perhaps, however, *rouge* cannot embelliſh that dazzling complexion; but it diſguiſes the bluſhing of provincial baſhfulneſs; (the fair ſtill bluſhes!) and if this artifice was not employed through coquetry, it might yet be ſo through prudence.

I thought that friendſhip made it incumbent on me to inform you of the reports which are ſpread. It ſeems to me that you would do well to apprize the Marquis of them, or, at leaſt, to take on the ſubject the advice of the Baron de Vordac and of Monſieur du Reſnel: Your brother's honour is at ſtake; ſuch an intereſt neceſſarily obliges you not to paſs all this over in ſilence, and, above all, to ſpeak of it to your neighbours, in order to ſhew them clearly that you and Madame d'Orgeval by no means approve of ſuch conduct.

duct. Do not quote me; but ſay that ten letters from Autun mention the matter to you; and, in fact, this ſcandalous ſtory is become here the ſubject of every converſation. To you I ſpeak frankly; but, in public, I warmly defend the Marchioneſs. I have declared myſelf her *Chevalier*, and every day I break for her an infinite number of lances. I fight with warmth, with courage; but without any hope of gaining the victory. Monſieur and Madame d'Erneville have a great many enemies; you are generally beloved, becauſe, with a conſiderable fund of penetration and amiableneſs, you have no preſumption; and it is well known how ridiculous the grand airs of *the great Albert* appear to you. The men adore the frankneſs and gaiety of Madame d'Orgeval; the women even do her juſtice: but people in general do not forgive your brother for diſavowing, for abjuring the name of his forefathers, for having aſſumed the title of *Marquis*, for thinking himſelf the

equal

equal of the moſt diſtinguiſhed nobles of this province, and for endeavouring to eclipſe them by a pomp that was never diſplayed by the late Count d'Erneville. The poor man was a fool, entirely governed by his wife; but he was of a moſt illuſtrious family; grandſon of a Marſhal of France, and ſon of a Knight of the Order of the *Holy Ghoſt*, he lived modeſtly, and by no means piqued himſelf on magnificence. Your brother, become through the moſt ſtrange caprice heir of his fortune, ought to have followed ſuch an example, and have ſhewn ſtill more ſimplicity. As for the Marchioneſs, ſhe is reproached with ſingularities and affectation, that muſt naturally diſpleaſe; independently of that diſplay of filial piety and *conjugal affection*, ſhe is reproached with a *gentleneſs* reſembling duplicity, an *humility* bordering on hypocriſy; for with a very pretty face, a great ſhare of genius and talents, it is neither natural nor poſſible to

have no vanity, no deſire to pleaſe and ſhine. The huſband and the wife aſpire *to perfection*; and every one, ſhocked at ſuch a preſumption, is delighted to collect the facts that balk it. Thus it was that the *ſublime Counteſs*, in her time, had alſo a great many enemies; her daughter has more underſtanding and more graces; but ſhe has all her pride, and all her profound diſſimulation.

As for us, my dear d'Orgeval, we are good ſort of people, who have the wiſh neither to make ourſelves ſingular, nor to excite admiration; we are not commended, but we are not hated; and we can, on occaſion, appear tolerably amiable: ſo we ought, like philoſophers, to conſole ourſelves for our *mediocrity*, on reflecting that the moſt brilliant ſucceſſes frequently produce ſad reverſes.

Adieu, my dear fellow; my reſpects, I beg, to Madame d'Orgeval.

P. S.

P. S. Do not forget to tell me the opinion of the *miſanthrope*, and of the *philoſopher*, reſpecting this ſtory.

LETTER XVIII.

From the COUNT DE POLIGNI *to the* DUKE DE ROSMOND.

Fontainebleau, June 16.

WHAT then is become of you, my dear Roſmond? I am expecting, in vain, the *concluſion of the romance*; you write to me no more. Are you ſtill a knight-errant? Has *the lady of your thoughts* at length rewarded ſo much love and perſeverance? She is not formed, you ſay, to be loved but for a moment, and you are determined to purchaſe the eſtate of ***. I oppoſe this project, which militates againſt common ſenſe. You would ſoon

be tired of a woman whoſe graces and beauty ſhould remain buried in the country. Love is fed by the encomiums beſtowed on the object of our affection. Do you believe that, but for the celebrity of Madame du Reſnel, your paſſion for her would have laſted four years; the moſt ſimple means are always the moſt ingenious; your new miſtreſs muſt be legally ſeparated from *the adored huſband*; you muſt bring her to us to Paris: this is a rational ſcheme.

The court has been at Fontainebleau theſe twelve days. Every thing goes on here according to cuſtom—we play deviliſh deep—we ruin ourſelves—we hunt a great deal—we fatigue ourſelves to death—we carry on the uſual tricks, intrigues, and dark plots; and it is aſſerted, that *the journey is delightful.* It is a faſhion to love Fontainebleau, which is the moſt frightful abode that I know, and to ſpeak ill of Verſailles, whoſe palace is ſo magni-

ficent, and whoſe gardens are ſo admirable; and St. Germain, the moſt charming habitation belonging to our kings, is quite forſaken! Do you know any thing more fooliſh or more ſenſeleſs than *the faſhion?* This is, however, what governs us all: Caprice and vanity are the regulators of the world. I think that the predilection for Fontainebleau is owing to its inſulated ſituation, and the length of the ſtay made there by the court; five or ſix weeks form a ſpace of time, the meaſure of which is ſufficient for affairs of ambition and engagements of love, and is not long enough to ſpoil the one and unravel the other. The women here are more with their lovers; at Verſailles, the frequent excurſions to Paris deſtroy all the comfort of ſociety: here, we ſee each other, we know each other more; we do not eſteem each other the better; but we chat, we ſlander, we intrigue quite at our eaſe, and without interruption; here pretty women

have a greater effect; private bickerings are more multiplied; and all this compoſes what we call a *delightful journey*.

The prudent St. Méran is here with his Prince. All the women have begun to ſet their caps at him; that is to ſay, all thoſe who wiſh to paſs for having wit, a pretenſion which they rarely have in their early youth; ſo that the circle of St. Méran's female admirers is ſomewhat ſuper-annuated, and I do not believe that he will loſe with them his *virtuous* phlegm and his noble indifference.

Our theatre is very brilliant; the decorations are ſuperb, the ballets enchanting, and the houſe always full. We have already been regaled with ſeveral new pieces, *two tragedies* and *three comedies*, which we have *cried up to the ſkies*, and which the public of Paris, according to their cuſtom, will not fail to hiſs next ſummer; for they have long ſince adopted the habit of applauding what we reject, and of abuſing unmer-

unmercifully what we admire! Are you not ſtruck at this ſort of revolt, ſo conſtant, of the people of Paris againſt the court? This open war did not at all exiſt in the laſt century. True it is, that then great miniſters protected great talents, and that Lewis XIV. had more taſte than the Lords of the Bedchamber. It is not neceſſary that a King ſhould be a good ſcholar; but he ſhould on this point, as well as on ſo many others, give his confidence only to people qualified to direct it properly. He loſes part of his perſonal conſequence when he appears to reliſh and protect ſtupid pieces, or even indifferent works, which have only the merit of agreeableneſs, and not that of utility. The firſt painter to the King is the worſt painter belonging to the academy; his architect is a man without any talent; his hiſtoriographer is a manufacturer of bad novels; his ſuperintendant of buildings and of arts, although the brother of an old female favourite, is a fool and

a blockhead; the judges of the plays for the court theatres are great lords, almoſt always incapable of feeling the harmony of a verſe. Can we be aſtoniſhed that the court, far from keeping the people in awe, is become the object of their laughter and deriſion? For not only the Pariſians take a pleaſure in reverſing the literary deciſions of Verſailles and Fontainebleau; but they never omit an opportunity of turning the court into ridicule. With what tranſport and unanimity they applaud the traits that can afford ſtriking alluſions againſt princes and courtiers! It is impoſſible to repreſs, by *lettres de cachet*, the inſolence of the pit of the opera and of the playhouſe; yet this want of reſpect eſtabliſhes a dangerous habit. Often at the play I am frightened when I conſider this animoſity of the pit. Each of the individuals who compoſe this audacious body, taken ſeparately, would proſtrate himſelf before the ſovereign power; but theſe very men, as

ſoon

ſoon as they are united, acquire boldneſs and ſtrength, and enjoy impunity.

Adieu, my friend, finiſh your romance, and return to us. It is uſeleſs to tell you how much you are wiſhed for, and how much we miſs you. Do you not know that though we can *ſupply your place*, we cannot find a *proper* ſubſtitute for you.

Madame du Reſnel *diverts her thoughts*, it is ſaid, with S * * *, but is not conſoled. I met her three weeks ago; ſhe is ſtill ſhowy, and has the fineſt eyes in the world; but ſhe is exceſſively thin. You would do well to write to her, and, on your return, to go and ſee her. She ſtill plays the part of *a forſaken nymph*. The women begin to take compaſſion on her fate.

Céſar, prends garde à toi *!

They will reckon you a *monſter* if you neglect this advice. But a little attention,

* Cæſar, beware!

that is to ſay, a few viſits, will ſtifle all theſe clamours; by obſerving, in ruptures, certain rules of decorum, we always come off with honour.

Adieu; endeavour to return before the court leaves Fontainebleau.

LETTER XIX.

The DUKE's *Anſwer.*

Autun, June 19.

I AM to ſet off from here the day after to-morrow, my dear Poligni; I ſhall ſpend a week at Moulins; thence I ſhall make a *little private excurſion* for two or three days, then I ſhall direct my route for Paris, where I ſhall certainly be on the 13th or 14th. This is my plan, on which you

may

may rely. You aſk of me *new details*, and it is impoſſible for me to give you any; yes, impoſſible!

Hark'ee Poligni; this is not a common adventure; there is neither a *prude* nor a *coquette* in queſtion. ..... In ſhort, I have promiſed, and have made a promiſe to myſelf, to preſerve in future an abſolute ſilence reſpecting this intrigue; and I require your friendſhip to reſpect an engagement which I will not break, and to aſk me henceforth no queſtion on this head. This diſcretion will ſurpriſe you; it will appear to you ridiculous; think what you pleaſe; but ſpeak to me no more on the ſubject.

My letters from Paris mention that Dercy has retired from buſineſs, and that he is near Senlis, ſhut up in a ſmall houſe with a young girl, his ward, whom he means to marry, and who is, they ſay, as beautiful as an angel. They add, that he is abſolutely like the guardian in the

play, and that he keeps his ward locked up in cloſe confinement. Have you heard of this hiſtory? I hope that Dercy is not a bankrupt. I have depoſited in his hands two hundred thouſand livres; if he does not return them to me I will carry off his ward, for I muſt needs have an indemnification.

Adieu, my dear Poligni; I think with pleaſure that we ſhall ſee each other again in the courſe of next month.

LETTER XX.

From the BARONNESS DE VORDAC *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

June 19.

THE ſtep which I take, Sir, will prove to you my eſteem, and its motives will be my

my excuſe. Not having it in my power to ſpeak to you in private, I have determined to write to you on a ſubject that intereſts me more than any thing in the world. It relates to Madame d'Erneville; to that angel who has lived only to practiſe virtue; to that woman, as intereſting from her innocence, the purity and admirable qualities of her mind, as ſhe is brilliant from her charms, from her underſtanding and her talents. So many perfections have long ſince excited the blackeſt envy, and people dare at length calumniate her! ..... Monſieur d'Orgeval is not aſhamed to ſpread reports the moſt injurious to my friend, and to propagate an abſurd ſtory, which he pretends to believe, in order to have a right to appear alarmed at it, and to publiſh it. Under pretence of *conſulting* Monſieur de Vordac, he came to relate to him theſe enormities invented at Autun (you will eaſily gueſs by whom). Monſieur de

Vordac,

Vordac, with ſome excellent qualities, has the injuſtice to believe eaſily all that is ſaid *againſt women*; he even takes a pride in being of this way of thinking. According to this too well-known diſpoſition, Monſieur d'Orgeval flattered himſelf that he would be liſtened to with a malignant joy; he was miſtaken. Monſieur de Vordac coolly replied—"*That is not impoſſible.*" Theſe words, which would be *a blaſphemy* in any other mouth, expreſs in his a perfect incredulity: "Beſides," continued Monſieur de Vordac, "let it be as "it may, you ought to impoſe ſilence on "thoſe who dare to tell you ſuch ſtories, of "which I ſee no poſitive proof. Madame "d'Erneville is very young, ſhe is a good "relation, ſhe is an amiable neighbour, "ſhe conducts herſelf with great propriety, "ſhe makes her huſband very happy; all "this juſtly entitles her to be treated with "particular reſpect." This anſwer confounded Monſieur d'Orgeval; he proteſted

teſted that he *loved* his ſiſter-in-law, that his intentions were pure, &c. This is what paſſed this morning. Monſieur d'Orgeval will, no doubt, take towards you the ſame ſtep; I am certain that you will ſhew him the moſt profound contempt for this infamous calumny; but this is not ſufficient: deign to make him ſenſible how odious a part *he is made to play*; let him thoroughly underſtand that your door will be ſhut againſt the enemies of Monſieur d'Erneville, and that you will prevail on Monſieur de Vordac to act in the ſame manner. I bluſh to ſay it; but the fear of no longer enjoying the pleaſures of ſuch a houſe as yours, will have more effect on theſe narrow and mean *ſouls* than any other conſideration. Repreſent to him too, that people will never ſucceed in diſuniting *Albert and Pauline*; and that if the latter is informed of theſe atrocious acts of malice, as ſhe has as much candour as goodneſs, it will be impoſſible for her to ſhew the ſame friendſhip to thoſe who de-

fame

ſame her; that then they can no longer make at the brilliant and hoſpitable caſtle of Erneville, *thoſe long ſtays* which are ſo convenient and ſo agreeable. All theſe reflections will make them reſolve to be ſilent, and Pauline will never be acquainted with all theſe enormities; which I ardently wiſh, for it is very true, notwithſtanding her exceſſive mildneſs, if ſhe knew them, ſhe would not to me diſſemble her indignation; queſtioned by Albert, ſhe would tell him all, which would produce many domeſtic troubles and a quarrel between the two brothers, the blame of which would be infallibly imputed to my friend: then envy no longer having any meaſures to keep, would give way to all the tranſports of hatred and revenge. It is you alone, Sir, who can prevent all theſe misfortunes. I conſign to your hands the deareſt of intereſts, and with the confidence that your knowledge and your high honour muſt inſpire.

Believe

Believe me, Sir, the proud Chevalier de Celtas will never forgive Pauline for having preferred to him the man whom ſhe loved from her infancy; he has ſworn in the bottom of his heart an implacable hatred to the three perſons the moſt worthy of the eſteem of all thoſe who know how to appreciate merit, the Counteſs, Albert, and Pauline. Monſieur d'Orgeval, loaded with the favours of the Counteſs and of Albert, but naturally of an *envious* diſpoſition, has, from his cradle, been jealous of his brother; Albert's ſuperiority, ſucceſs, fortune, and happineſs have ſucceſſively exalted this diabolical ſentiment, which is become his ruling paſſion. Madame d'Orgeval, as unfeeling as her huſband, has full as much vanity, and has not more underſtanding. Pauline's charming perſon would have been ſufficient to excite her averſion; judge what the aſſemblage of ſo many graces and talents muſt produce. In ſhort, Pauline is the

grand-

grand-daughter of a Marſhal of France; Madame d'Orgeval's grandfather kept a wine vault; the houſe of the avaricious and rich Dupuis is gloomy, wretched, and ill furniſhed; Erneville caſtle is the moſt brilliant and the moſt elegant in the province: what ſubjects of envy, what motives of hatred!

If Pauline had a real confidence in ſuch perſons, I would ſet her right in regard to them; but this is what will never happen. Her goodneſs inclines her to love them; a ſecret inſtinct prevents her from eſteeming them. She miſtruſts them not, but, as long as ſhe lives, ſhe will never be tempted to open her heart to them. Let us leave her in poſſeſſion of her ſweet ſecurity: this amiable confidence which proceeds from ſo pure a mind, is in itſelf an affecting virtue, and an additional charm. Ah! if you knew, as I do, that incomparable ſoul!..... that inexhauſtible

fund

fund of ſenſibility, generoſity, and delicacy!..... With ſo many brilliant qualities, Pauline is ſincerely humble, becauſe ſhe is grateful; ſhe attributes to education alone even the enchanting gifts which ſhe has received from Nature; ſhe does not believe that ſhe has more underſtanding than another; ſhe thinks only that it has been better cultivated; ſhe does not pride herſelf on any virtue, becauſe not one coſts her any effort, and ſhe gratifies her ſweeteſt inclinations in practiſing them all. A ſoul profoundly loving makes her appreciate all her happineſs, and inſpires her with that univerſal benevolence, that enchanting ſweetneſs, that evenneſs of temper, which render her company ſo delightful. The great examples which ſhe has received from her mother, the knowledge of the generous diſpoſition of her huſband, and the ſtudy of her own heart, have unfortunately given her very exaggerated

exaggerated ideas of human nature. She ſees every thing in the beſt light; ſhe miſtruſts no one, and thinks herſelf ſecure from all ſuſpicion. If there is a creature on earth perfectly happy, it is Pauline; her happineſs is ſo pure and ſo affecting that it is, on that account, reſpectable; and as ſhe never intends to quit the ſpot where ſhe reſides, can ſhe not preſerve it always? To diſturb it, to impair it by gloomy hints, would ſeem to me a profanation, and would certainly be a cruelty. Let us watch over her, let us prevent the dark deſigns of her envious calumniators; let us make them miſcarry, but let her not know them; let us leave her in poſſeſſion of her ſweet illuſions and her angelic ſerenity. Life to her is an enchantment: O! may ſuch an error be prolonged for a length of time! let friendſhip at leaſt not have the barbarity to ſnatch it from her!

I have

I have been leſs fortunate than her, and I am five years older; I am *very old* in compariſon to Pauline, for I ſee objects ſuch as they are, and I feel every day that this is a great misfortune, eſpecially in youth. This ſort of reaſon gives a melancholy foreſight, and throws a very gloomy veil over a long futurity!....

Adieu, Sir, I flatter myſelf that your friendſhip for Monſieur and Madame d'Erneville, and the villany of their envious detractors, will induce you to excuſe this importunity; and I feel a great pleaſure in giving this proof of confidence to the perſon of our neighbourhood whom I think the moſt ſincere admirer of my dear Pauline, and whom conſequently I eſteem the moſt.

LETTER XXI.

MONSIEUR DU RESNEL'S *Anſwer to the* BARONESS.

Gilly, June 19.

You are, Madam, a ſincere friend. This panegyric comprehends all others, all thoſe at leaſt which are worthy of you.

I received the letter with which you have honoured me, with a very ſincere gratitude, and I read it with a profound ſenſibility. I have done ſtill better than to follow your orders, Madam, I have anticipated them. Your letter did not arrive till an hour after my interview with Monſieur d'Orgeval whom I ſent away exceſſively diſſatisfied, and who left me filled with the moſt juſt indignation.

In

In order that I might perfectly learn his intentions, I did not at first repel his confidence; on the contrary, I let him say every thing that he wished to relate, interrupting him only to ask him questions. When we are not blinded by passion, and we have some experience, it is much more easy than we think, to read in the heart of the wicked, who are desirous of passing for good. The more honest, feeling, and delicate we are, the more easily we penetrate them. There always escapes those debased souls some traits which discover them; they are deficient in the expression and the tone of truth, and frequently they awkwardly betray themselves without having the smallest suspicion of it. I saw so clearly Monsieur d'Orgeval's perfidious intentions, that it appeared to me inconceivable that he could have the hope of disguising them from me. After having listened to him for upwards of three quarters of an hour, I at length began to speak,

ſpeak, in order to tell him exactly all that I read in your letter. He appeared greatly ſurpriſed and very much out of countenance; he acknowledged that I was in the right, that it was neceſſary to deſpiſe *theſe reports, &c.* But figure to yourſelf, Madam, that he aſked me *whether his duty did not oblige him* to write theſe particulars to his brother and to the Counteſs? ..... I anſwered this queſtion ſo as to deprive him of ſuch a wiſh; he then told me that there was ſo *great a clamour* againſt the Marchioneſs, that he was afraid his brother and the Counteſs would be informed of all, by *anonymous letters*. "If ſuch an infamous action be com-" mitted," rejoined I, "that will be very " unfortunate for you, Sir"—"What?" —"Yes, I tell you frankly, every one " will accuſe of this infamy, the only man " that can hate the Marchioneſs, if he " be not equitable and generous, the " Chevalier de Celtas; and as he is your

" intimate

" intimate friend, the ſhame of this ac-
" cuſation will recoil on you."—" The
" Chevalier de Celtas is perfectly the
" gentleman, and I flatter myſelf that you
" are perſuaded of it?"—" Certainly I
" find the Chevalier de Celtas very amia-
" ble, and I ſee him with great pleaſure;
" but we are here talking between our-
" ſelves, and in all confidence; and I will
" naturally own to you, that if the Mar-
" quis or the Counteſs received anony-
" mous letters againſt the Marchioneſs,
" I ſhould attribute this atrocity only to
" the ſecret rage of a rejected lover. In
" a word, I ſhould believe that Celtas
" was the author of thoſe letters; I ſhould
" proclaim this aloud, and I would never
" ſee him as long as I live."—" That
" would be judging on very ſlight
" grounds."—" It is a pretty com-
" mon failing. Yourſelf, my dear d'Or-
" geval, notwithſtanding your affection
" for your angelic ſiſter-in-law, notwith-

" ſtanding her exemplary conduct; did " you not incline, juſt now, to think her " at leaſt imprudent and a coquette?"— " Celtas has courage, and has proved it; " he will not quietly ſuffer his honour to " be attacked."—" Well, Monſieur " d'Orgeval, I give you leave to tell him " from this moment, what I have juſt " confided to you; and if he be offended " at it he may come here, he will find " me." At theſe words d'Orgeval launched out into proteſtations of friendſhip; I told him that I thought them very ſincere, and we parted on very *friendly* terms. Diſpel your fears, Madam; they will henceforth be ſilent; they are as cowardly, as mean, as they are malicious.

I ſhall pay my reſpects to you to-morrow, I ſhall talk all this over with Monſieur de Vordac, and I will do every thing in my power to keep him in his good diſpoſitions. He has too much ſenſe to be the dupe of ſo viſible and ſo abſurd a piece of malice.

Yes,

Yes, Madam, let us *watch over her!* How affecting this word is, and how highly am I honoured by ſuch an aſſociation! Let us form a *holy league* to defend innocence and virtue! And rely for ever on the moſt ardent zeal and an unlimited devotion.

LETTER XXII.

From the MARCHIONESS *to her Huſband.*

Erneville, June 19.

I NOW expect, every moment, the news of your return; I wake at an early hour on poſt days, as if the letters were to arrive the ſooner on that account. All my preparations are made for going to meet you. With what delight ſhall I find myſelf again between my friend and our excellent mother! What things we ſhall

have to ſay to each other! and after ſuch a long abſence!.....

Erneville grows handſomer every day, it ſeems to be adorned to receive you; the park is delightful, never were *Pauline's groves* ſo green and ſo buſhy; but you will not have ſeen the charming bloſſoms of *the two almond-trees* and the pretty baſket of violets and lilies of the valley! ..... Every day I go and read over your letters on *our ſeat*, near the hollow tree; I no longer ſigh in looking at the empty place; I ſay to myſelf, "he will "be here in a few days." I put my little Maurice into the hollow of the tree, he likes ſo well to be there; I give him moſs and flowers; he plays, I contemplate him, he looks at me and ſmiles!..... This picture reminds me of one which I cannot recollect; but which my imagination makes me enjoy. I repreſent to myſelf my Albert eight or nine years old, thus placing in this very tree his Pauline ſtill

in

in her cradle; I ſee Albert melted, I hear him ſay, ſighing: "*Dear child! O! my "ſiſter! will you always love me ſo?*" Thus it is that I poſſeſs myſelf of your recollections, and confound them with mine. How I love Erneville! every thing here ſpeaks to me of you; cheriſhed ſpot, delightful Eden, from which we ſhall never be baniſhed!..... Ah, my friend! when I reflect on my happineſs I am ſometimes terrified at it; for, in ſhort, it is aſſerted that we muſt always have ſome troubles in life; yet I ſtill venture to form a wiſh, ingrate that I am! my incomparable little Maurice is not ſufficient for me, I would likewiſe have a daughter! But if heaven refuſes her to me, you have promiſed to let me adopt one; may I then be as fortunate in *adoption* as my mother is!.....

I ſtill pay the ſame attention to my little girls' ſchool: independently of the good reſulting from it for theſe poor or-

phans, this ſweet occupation is a very uſeful thing to a young mother; I learn to teach, to know children, and I acquire the habit of patience. Mademoiſelle du Rocher ſeconds me with zeal and intelligence; ſhe is very charitable and very good. All theſe little girls are extremely attached to me; gratitude is a ſentiment ſo natural, that I believe no more in ungrateful people than I do in atheiſts. Suzette is ſtill my favourite.

Our rural balls recommenced as uſual on the firſt of June; but I do not dance at them. I remember, although I was then but ſeven or eight years old, that during the eighteen months we ſpent in Paris for your education, you applied yourſelf diligently to dancing, which you did not love at that time, in order, you ſaid, to be able to *become the only dancing-maſter of Pauline*. You became Gardel's beſt ſcholar; and my fondneſs for dancing

is certainly owing only to the pleaſure that I have had in ſeeing you dance, and in receiving your leſſons. The proof of this is, that, without you, dancing appears to me the moſt inſipid thing in the world; and then, what are to me the encomiums that are beſtowed on me for this frivolous talent, when you do not hear them? I feel the value of praiſes only when Albert is there to witneſs them, and I ſee the ſweet effect of them in his ſatisfied looks.

I alſo wait for you in order to reſume my riding; my brother-in-law has obligingly offered to take me out on horſeback; but I will not receive *leſſons* but from my *real maſter*..... *My maſter!* how I love to give you this title in the moſt extenſive ſignification! You, my ſovereign *by election!* you whom I have choſen, whom I have given myſelf for *maſter* with ſo much joy! Supreme power of ſentiment! it does more than ennoble

dependence, it renders it delightful! Oh! how wiſe and beneficent was nature in creating us feeble and timid, and in giving to men only ſtrength, courage, and ſuperiority! This was preparing the ties of an affecting and ſacred union, formed, on the one hand, by generous protection; and, on the other, by the want of ſupport, and by gratitude. The moſt feeble being loves not better, no doubt; but ſhe muſt love with more devotion: ſhe has beſides the ſentiment of a ſweet gratitude; and obedience is not merely her duty, it is likewiſe her ſecurity. Her attachment may be compared to the affection ſo warm and ſo ſubmiſſive of a child; and that of generous man reſembles the ſublime tenderneſs of a mother. Such is, ſuch ought to be, conjugal love! And can I be grieved to feel my weakneſs when your ſtrength ſupports me?..... Oh! how much ſweeter is it to me to ſtand in need of you, to call you to my aſſiſtance,

ance, to put myſelf under your protection, than it would be to be able to diſpenſe with it! What enjoyments of ſelf-love can equal thoſe of the heart! Not to chooſe to act but according to the deſires of what we love, is a wiſh ſo ſimple and ſo natural! Ah! when your will directs me, I ſacrifice nothing to you, I gratify myſelf, I obey my real impulſe. Come back then to diſpoſe of every moment of your Pauline; ſhe has without you only uncertain inclinations, ſhe no longer acts but by routine; ſhe no longer decides but by ſuppoſition, ſaying to herſelf: "*He "would approve, he would preſcribe this!*" come back to order and reign, come back to reſtore to me the moſt pure, the moſt perfect, and the beſt appreciated happineſs!

Do not forget to bring your ſiſter-in-law a very pretty preſent. I think that what would pleaſe her moſt, would be ſome handſome china.

I alſo beg you to bring a blue and white ſtriped ſilk gown for Mademoiſelle du Rocher; you will delight her if you add to this gift ſome water or ſome pomatum for freckles, ſome Engliſh *ſoap* for the hands; you know her fondneſs for all *coſmetics*, and her confidence in them; for, as the Chevalier de Celtas very properly ſays, ſhe has all the ſuperſtitions of the toilet. For me, I deſire nothing but *another picture* of a ſtriking likeneſs, and a hat or a little cap that pleaſes you.

LETTER XXIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

June 21.

THE poſt arrives to-morrow, and I have ſome good ſurmiſes. I am ſo happy that theſe cannot deceive me. Since I exiſt, foreſight is to me only the anticipation of happineſs.

Your brother and your ſiſter-in-law are fixed here, and will not take their departure till I have received the *joyful news*. Deniſe is every day more amiable towards me; I could ſometimes wiſh that ſhe had different manners; but ſhe has an excellent heart and a charming diſpoſition. Your brother ſhews me a ſincere friendſhip; he gains much by being known. We had a great deal of company to din-

ner, Monſieur and Madame de Vordac, the Chevalier de Celtas, and the worthy Monſieur du Reſnel; we talked of nothing but you and your return: what a happineſs to ſee only relations and friends, who ſhare our ſentiments, and with whom we can converſe on what concerns us, without being afraid of tiring them out!

After dinner, Madame de Vordac and Monſieur du Reſnel abſolutely inſiſted on hearing me read a tragedy; I read *Andromaque*, my favourite piece. Will you believe that I made the Baron de Vordac ſhed tears; he was ſo aſhamed of it that he called me a *ſyren:* on this the Chevalier de Celtas ſaid to me: "Take "care of yourſelf, Madam; this appel- "lation may ſtick to you." Your brother greatly applauded this ſpeech; as for me I by no means liked it; but *the moſt excellent of friends*, the dear Vordac, took it ſo much amiſs that I was embarraſſed: ſhe grew angry in good earneſt with this

poor

poor Chevalier, who had had no other intention than that of ſaying *a civil thing*. Fortunately Monſieur du Reſnel, with much wit and grace, turned into pleaſantry a quarrel really very bitter and very violent.

It is a long time ſince I have given you an account of my private readings. I have finiſhed the entire works of Fenelon, and I fully promiſe myſelf to begin them again. What morality and what judgment in his *Dialogues des Morts!* Can you conceive that thoſe of Fontenelle have a higher reputation and are better known? How intereſting are his letters! What ſtrength of reaſoning in his diſcourſes! What an author! What an admirable aſſemblage of ſenſibility, ſublime, virtue, imagination, acuteneſs, reaſon, and genius!

I have alſo read two very celebrated works; but which I do not by any means like, *Le Temple de Gnide*, and *Sterne's Sentimental*

Sentimental Journey. The former uninteresting, without any imagination, and without moral, is, as it strikes me, written with affectation and in a trifling manner; its style appears to me too loose; it is a gallery of little portraits, and a collection of elegant, but far-fetched phrases; it is wit, and that is all.

This work has only the *Greek dress*; it has, in other respects, neither the simplicity nor the taste of the antique. Can a production, so cold and so pitiful, be compared to those fine works of the ancients, the translations of which you have read to me?

As for the *Sentimental Journey*, I see in it an affectation of goodness and sensibility which to me is insupportable. This man who, on setting out from home, has laid a wager, and has promised his readers to collect, at every step, a *trait of sentiment*, and who finds some even in the

manner of taking *a pinch of ſnuff*, this man appears to me the moſt inſipid and the moſt incorrect of all travellers. However, there is in this book ſome very pretty details; but, in my opinion, the plan and the whole work itſelf are good for nothing.

You ſee with what boldneſs *I decide* againſt the received opinion; but you wiſh me to judge according to my heart and the impreſſion that I receive, and I obey. I believe that if every one judged in this manner, many books would loſe a great part of their reputation.

Adieu, my Albert, adieu! to-day I write without pain that melancholy word; we are on the point of ſeeing each other again!..... If to-morrow the *joyful news* is announced to me, I ſet off immediately; on Tueſday I ſhall be at Dijon!..... O! can you conceive my impatience and my joy? Yes, your heart alone can paint to you all that is paſſing in mine.

LETTER XXIV.

From the ſame to her Siſter-in-law MADAME D'ORGEVAL.

Erneville, July 1.

ALAS! my dear ſiſter, our ſuſpenſe is unfortunately baniſhed. He does not come back. Figure to yourſelf that he no longer fixes the moment of his return; he will, perhaps, remain at Paris five or ſix months more! Beſides his perſonal affairs, he has a great many others which are duties. You know the commiſſion with which he was charged by the parliament of Dijon. The firſt Preſident has lately written to him to give him others beſides; he has ſent me a copy of his letter. It is very honourable at his age to have found means to merit thus the confidence

fidence of ſo reſpectable a body, and he ought to neglect nothing to juſtify it. I feel all this; but I alſo feel his abſence! I who, ſince I exiſted, have never been ſeparated from him! ..... From the unreaſonable ſorrow with which you ſaw me oppreſſed on Thurſday, through the mere uncertainty of his return, judge what I now experience. What grieves me moſt is the profound melancholy of his letter, and the uneaſineſs which he betrays in it on my account. I know that he has alſo written to your huſband. I conjure you, dear Deniſe, to prevail on Monſieur d'Orgeval to fully diſpel his poor brother's alarms reſpecting my health and my reaſon. I do not aſk him to tell a falſehood; but I beg him as a favour not to mention the ſtate I was in on Thurſday, and to tell him, to proteſt to him, that I am very well, and that I am reaſonable. In fact my health is not bad, and I will take the greateſt care of it.

Albert

Albert wiſhes me to paſs three months with my mother, and I ſet out to-morrow with my little Maurice. To be again with my mother is the only conſolation that I can receive; I love her ſo dearly, and ſhe dearly loves Albert!.....

I leave here Mademoiſelle du Rocher. Her finger being at laſt healed ſhe is going to reſume the copy of the *hiſtory* which I had promiſed you, and which you would have had two months ago, but for this accident. She will ſend it to you as ſoon as ſhe has finiſhed it.

Adieu, my dear ſiſter; if you have any commiſſions to give me for Dijon, ſend them to me this evening, becauſe I ſhall ſet off to-morrow morning very early, not chooſing to run the riſk of being at night full in the foreſt of Marna; for I have no longer my guide and my protector, and I am afraid of every thing! Adieu; I embrace you with a heavy heart, but with a ſincere friendſhip.

My

My compliments to the Chevalier de Celtas, if he is ſtill at Monſieur Dupui's.

LETTER XXV.

From MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL *to the* MARQUIS D'ERNEVILLE *his Brother.*

July 5.

I SEE with pain, my dear brother, that you are tormenting yourſelf very unreaſonably concerning your wife. I can aſſure you with truth, that Pauline has aſtoniſhed us all by her being ſo reaſonable ſince your departure. Poſſeſſed of feeling, as ſhe is, her tranquillity in this reſpect is quite ſurpriſing. We have conſtantly ſeen her very gay, very ſhowy, and more blooming than ever. Your permiſſion to go to Dijon has given her the greateſt pleaſure.

pleaſure. Independently of that of ſeeing her mother, ſhe promiſes herſelf a great deal from company; and then, at her age, and with her vivacity, every change in life diſpels care, and amuſes. Do not make yourſelf uneaſy then, my dear brother; I aſſure you that your fears on this head have no ſort of foundation.

There is the fineſt ſport this year on Gilly manor; I ſhot two and thirty birds the laſt time I was out.

Old Vordac has the gout at this moment. The vines have a moſt promiſing appearance; the vintage, this year, will produce Monſieur Dupui at leaſt fifteen thouſand livres.

Adieu, my dear brother; my wife embraces you; and Celtas, who is here, deſires to be remembered.

I beg you to buy me a fowling-piece exactly like du Reſnel's. You will oblige me by ſending me alſo a ſmall ſtock of Engliſh fiſhing-lines.

LETTER XXVI.

From MADEMOISELLE DU ROCHER *to* MADAME D'ORGEVAL.

Erneville, July 6.

MADAM, I have the honour of ſending you the copy of the hiſtory of the Counteſs. I could not finiſh it till this morning; for the precipitate departure of the Marchioneſs leaves a great deal of buſineſs on my hands. It is no ſmall trouble to manage, all alone, a family like this (without mentioning the little girls' ſchool). I will venture to ſay that old Laurence and myſelf fully do the work of three or four perſons; but, thanks to God! nothing goes amiſs.

The Marchioneſs ſet off in a ſtate deſerving of pity; ſhe wept a great deal on getting

getting into the carriage. I took the liberty of ſaying to her, that it was neceſſary to make up our mind to circumſtances; ſhe was dreadfully altered.

The Marquis has had the condeſcenſion to write to me unknown to the Marchioneſs, (I may ſay that this is not the firſt proof of confidence that he has given me). He wiſhes me to acquaint him with his lady's real ſituation, and on her ſide the Marchioneſs told me (in private) that ſhe would not for the world that the Marquis ſhould know how much ſhe fretted; ſo that I find myſelf in a very delicate predicament, and, as it were, encompaſſed with danger. I flatter myſelf, Madam, that, in theſe critical circumſtances, you will deign to aſſiſt me with your advice, and that Monſieur d'Orgeval, on your interceſſion, will alſo favour me with his. I have the honour of returning you *Hippolyte Comte de Douglas* and *La Princeſſe de Carency*. There are ſome very

very noble ſentiments in theſe two novels. I think with you, Madam, that novels as reſpectable, as theſe cannot but ſtrengthen the mind in the love of virtue. I will not boaſt; but God knows my heart; I can hold up my head, and I have read novels from my earlieſt infancy.

I take the liberty, Madam, of ſending, with my letter a carp, hoping from your kindneſs that you will condeſcend to accept this little preſent which Monſieur Laurence caught this morning.

I am, with reſpect,

Madam, your very humble ſervant,

ROSALIE DU ROCHER.

P. S. You had the goodneſs to promiſe me *l'Illuſtre Napolitain* and *le Criminel Vertueux*. The titles of theſe two works prepoſſeſs greatly in their favour. I expect them with impatience. You may entruſt them to the bearer.

LETTER XXVII.

MADAME D'ORGEVAL'S *Anſwer to* MADEMOISELLE DU ROCHER.

July 6.

MY dear Mademoiſelle du Rocher, I thank you for the carp and the copy.

The Chevalier de Celtas, who is ſetting out for Autun, will call to-morrow at Erneville, and will ſee you, in order to explain to you how you ought to anſwer my brother, in conſequence of what my ſiſter has recommended to us. On this point do every thing that the Chevalier tells you. You know that he is a very ſenſible man, and that he is very much attached to our family, and eſteems you infinitely.

I ſend you the two novels, and the Chevalier will alſo bring you another entitled

titled *Le Beau-frère ſuppoſé*: it is very intereſting, and terribly tragical.

Adieu, my dear Mademoiſelle du Rocher, I embrace you, and am

Your affectionate ſervant,

Deniſe Dupui d'Orgeval.

HISTORY

OF

THE COUNTESS D'ERNEVILLE.

WRITTEN BY PAULINE,

Reviſed and abridged by the Counteſs.

(Sent to Madame d'Orgeval.)

MADEMOISELLE de Crény, an orphan, ſix years of age, was brought up in a convent in Paris. From her childhood, ſhe formed an intimacy with a girl of her own age, alſo an orphan, named Pauline de Verneuil. This friendſhip gathering ſtrength from time and reaſon, became, in the ſequel, the ruling paſſion of theſe two young women. They choſe to live in the ſame apartment, and no longer quitted each other. Read-

ing,

ing, leſſons, amuſements, every thing was common between them; and this voluntary aſſociation gave to their diſpoſitions, and to their turn of mind, all the conformity that already exiſted in their feelings.

When the two friends had attained their ſeventeenth year, as they were very amiable, accompliſhed, handſome, and rich, many matches were offered them. Mademoiſelle de Crény married firſt, and choſe the Count d'Erneville. She obtained permiſſion from Pauline's guardian to take her to her houſe; ſo they were not ſeparated.

The Count d'Erneville had for his intimate friend a Monſieur d'Orgeval. The latter fell in love with Mademoiſelle de Verneuil; and he begged the Counteſs to declare to her his ſentiments. Pauline anſwered that ſhe felt an inclination for Monſieur d'Orgeval, and would with pleaſure ſettle in the country; but that

ſhe could not reſolve to quit the ſpot where her friend was fixed. "Well," ſaid the Counteſs, "if Monſieur d'Erne-
"ville conſents to it, I will gladly give up
"Paris for the happineſs of Pauline. We
"have a fine country-ſeat in Burgundy; I
"ſhould think myſelf extremely fortunate
"to be able to devote there my whole
"life to friendſhip."

Count d'Erneville, although the ſon of a Marſhal of France, and himſelf highly diſtinguiſhed for his military talents, had no other ambition than that of ſerving his country well, and diſcharging his duty. He went ſeldom to court, and he loved neither diſſipation nor the great world; thus the project of the Counteſs perfectly ſuited his taſte. However, he was afraid that a young and charming woman, who had never lived in the country, would not be able to accuſtom herſelf to ſuch a kind of life; he therefore thought it incumbent on him to make her

ſeveral

ſeveral repreſentations on this ſubject. The Counteſs not only perſiſted in her reſolution; but ſhe conjured her huſband to ſell, without delay, the houſe that he occupied; "in order," ſaid ſhe, "that we may not "have, in future, any more poſſibility than "temptation to quit our caſtle, and to "come even occaſionally to Paris. My "female friend," added ſhe, "will not "need this aſſurance; but it will be ſo "pleaſing to me to give it her!....." The Count joyfully granted his conſent. By this arrangement, his fortune, which was very moderate for Paris, became very conſiderable; and he found himſelf the richeſt nobleman in Burgundy, as he was, in every reſpect, the moſt prudent and the moſt happy.

The houſe was not ſold till the expiration of three months; they then ſet off for Burgundy. Erneville was not at that time what it has ſince become. Its gardens

were gloomy and ill kept; the noble but Gothic architecture of the caſtle, its ancient towers, the immenſe ſize of the apartments, the thickneſs of the walls, the antiquity of the furniture, every thing offered an aſpect ſo much the more melancholy as it was near the end of October, and they arrived there at the cloſe of the day, in dull and rainy weather.

How much ought we to fear our ſenſations! Thoſe inconſiderate movements, thoſe ſudden impreſſions, which impel us, and which may *hurry us away*, although they are not only independent of our affections, but are often at variance with our deareſt ſentiments, and, in ſhort, are almoſt always excited by the moſt frivolous cauſes and objects. The Counteſs had quitted Paris with rapture; ſhe there regretted nothing; ſhe was ſure to find happineſs at Erneville; and yet ſhe experienced, on entering the caſtle, a ſlight oppreſſion of the heart, and an emotion of melancholy

which

which eſcaped not the eyes of Mademoiſelle de Verneuil. The Count, who had orders to give, left the two friends *tête-à-tête*. Mademoiſelle de Verneuil then threw herſelf into the arms of the Counteſs, burſting into tears. Theſe two women knew each other too well for an explanation ever to be neceſſary between them; they divined each other's ſentiments ſo perfectly, that they anſwered their thoughts with the certainty of never being miſtaken. "Well, my friend," ſaid the Counteſs, "would you take for regret, "a childiſh and abſolutely mechanical "movement, which I ſhould not have ex-"perienced if the old tapeſtry had not "been ſo black, and if the panes of glaſs "of theſe windows were clearer and "larger?"—"Ah!" exclaimed Mademoiſelle de Verneuil, "what an abode for "me!..... I had not ſufficiently reflect-"ed on your ſacrifice; now it terrifies me!" —"You therefore love me leſs?"—"What!

" it is in this ſolitude that all your happy
" days will glide away?—Ah! Pauline,
" pure days, thoſe are the *happy days* for
" ſouls ſuch as ours. Who can have a
" perfect certainty of preſerving all her
" innocence in the dangerous place that
" we have juſt quitted? I know it, I had
" nothing to fear from my heart; the ſen-
" timents that fill it will always ſuffice for
" it; but, in the great world, the moſt law-
" ful and the moſt tender affections often
" ſerve only to render our faults leſs excu-
" ſable; the more feeling we have, the
" more warm and dangerous are our ſen-
" ſations, and eſpecially in the abode where
" the deluſion of the arts and the refinements
" of luxury and gallantry are reproducing
" and multiplying them inceſſantly! I was
" not able either to conquer or to diſſemble
" an unreaſonable ſadneſs which my heart
" diſavowed; to what perils muſt not ſuch
" a weakneſs expoſe us, when we are con-
" tinually ſurrounded by ſnares and ſedu-

" cing

" cing objects? And are not thoſe fleeting,
" but invincible impreſſions, added to the
" contagion of example, a thouſand times
" more formidable than paſſions which can
" riſe only by degrees? ..... Let me
" then thank friendſhip that brought me
" to this ſolitude which it will render ſo
" dear to me; ſhe has guided me like
" wiſdom; ſhe may ſupply its place. Her
" advice reſembles that of virtue, and her
" inſpirations are favours. It is ſhe that,
" for ever ſheltering us from errors and
" ſtorms, has found means to ſnatch us
" from the enchanting gardens of Armida,
" in order to reſtore us to nature and truth.
" O! what inappreciable happineſs to find
" ourſelves in a ſafe and peaceful port,
" with youth, innocence, and friendſhip!"

Theſe reflections came from the heart, and they reſtored to the two friends all their tranquillity. The next day they carefully examined the caſtle; it appeared to be embelliſhed. They admired the

beauty of the proſpect, the majeſty of the Loire and of the ſurrounding foreſt; they received the ingenuous and ſincere homages of the worthy rector, the villagers, and the peaſants; they viſited the farm and ſeveral cottages, and they ſaid to each other in the evening: "This is a day that has been "ſpent in a uſeful, pure, and delightful "manner, and it exhibits to us the ſweet "image of all our future life."

Three weeks after the arrival of the two friends at Erneville, Mademoiſelle de Verneuil married Monſieur d'Orgeval. The latter then poſſeſſed the pretty eſtate of Gilly; but the croſs-road that led from Erneville to Gilly was almoſt impaſſable in winter; it was immediately repaired with ſo much care and ſolidity, that it is ſtill at this day as fine as our high roads. Half-way, were planted four Lombardy poplars; near theſe trees was built, in brick, a large covered ſeat, and, by the ſide of the ſeat, was erected a ſtone pillar, on which was

engraved

engraved this inſcription, taken from the *Edda: Let us never ſuffer the graſs to grow on the road of friendſhip.*

A few months after the marriage of Monſieur d'Orgeval, the two friends became pregnant at the ſame time. It was decided that Madame d'Orgeval ſhould come and lie in at her friend's houſe; that as well as the Counteſs ſhe ſhould ſuckle her child, and that ſhe ſhould remain at Erneville all the time of its being nurſed. In fact, Madame d'Orgeval, having attained the ſeventh month of her pregnancy, took up her abode at Erneville. Then the two friends no longer thought of any thing but the children that were to be born. They promiſed one another, if the children were of the ſame ſex, to bring them up together as brothers or ſiſters; and if they were of different ſexes, to unite them one day to each other. In forming ſuch ſweet projects, each of them worked at her friend's baby linen; and thus it

was that ſo tender a friendſhip added a farther intereſt to the delightful hopes of maternity.

The term of pregnancy arrived; the Counteſs lay in the firſt, of ſo weak a child that no hopes were entertained of bringing it up. This apprehenſion was concealed from her; ſhe was unexperienced in this reſpect, and was the more eaſy to be deceived as different ſymptoms having led the midwife to conjecture that ſhe would not have a good labour, he took the uſeful precaution of appriſing her, that, according to cuſtom, her child would be given to her only in the courſe of two or three days, a child newly born not beginning to ſuck till after that ſpace of time. He added, that till then ſhe muſt not aſk any ſort of queſtion, and that ſhe would not even be told what ſex the child was of. The Counteſs, with the reaſon and mildneſs that characteriſe her, ſubmitted to every thing. When ſhe was delivered, the midwife

midwife hurried away the child, which died a few hours after its birth. Its mother, far from ſuſpecting her misfortune, abandoned herſelf to the livelieſt and pureſt joy, and wrung the heart of all thoſe who ſurrounded her, by her perfect ſecurity. The phyſicians declared, that it was neceſſary to find means to prolong her error for a few weeks, becauſe ſhe could not be undeceived ſooner without endangering her life. While every one was a prey to grief, Madame d'Orgeval who had been at her friend's lying-in, and from whom it had not been poſſible to conceal any thing, ſuddenly took a reſolution the moſt extraordinary and the moſt affecting. In the evening ſhe went and locked herſelf up in a cabinet with the Count and her huſband, and begging them to liſten to her without interrupting her, ſhe held to them the following diſcourſe: "We muſt not "deceive ourſelves reſpecting the ſituation "of my unfortunate friend; I know better

"than

" than any one the exceſs of her ſenſibility,
" and the ineſtimable value that ſhe at-
" taches to the happineſs of being a mo-
" ther. Irrevocably decided on ſuckling
" her child, no artifice will be able to pre-
" vail on her to renounce this project;
" thus it will be neceſſary in three days
" to acquaint her with her misfortune,
" and, in the condition ſhe is in, it will be
" her death. But ſuppoſing that ſhe had
" the ſtrength and courage to ſupport this
" dreadful ſhock without ſinking under
" her grief, reflect, that even then we
" ſhould all four be as much to be pitied
" as we have till now been happy: all our
" domeſtic happineſs will be deſtroyed.
" I ſhall become, in regard to my deareſt
" friend, a ſad object of chagrin and envy;
" my felicity will no longer be hers: what
" do I ſay? it will increaſe her troubles.
" My child will excite in her only a heart-
" rending recollection; ſhe will not ſee it
" in my arms but with grief; her generous

" heart

" heart will not forgive itſelf this ſenti-
" ment, alas! ſo natural. She will wiſh to
" conceal it from me; I ſhall loſe her con-
" fidence, and her tears will no longer be
" ſhed in my boſom. Theſe are inevitable
" misfortunes which I foreſee. I have
" found an infallible method of preventing
" them. Deign to approve it, and I will
" be anſwerable for every thing."

" Certain ſymptoms announce to me
" that it is impoſſible for me not to be
" brought to bed in four and twenty hours.
" Let us give my child to my friend, at the
" ſame time perſuading her that it is her
" own; let her continue in this error all the
" time neceſſary for ſuckling it; let her be
" told that, having no milk, I had it not
" in my power to ſuckle my child, and
" that it is put out to nurſe; let her be
" prepared by degrees for the idea that
" this child cannot live. As ſoon as I ſhall
" be in a ſituation to get up, I will ſee
" her, and I will tell her myſelf that I have

"loſt my child. The courage which ſhe "will find in me will very naturally conſole "her for my misfortune. When ſhe has "weaned the child, we may undeceive "without endangering her life. I take "this taſk on myſelf; and, from the perfect "knowledge I have of her diſpoſition, I "dare even aſſert that, at this period, ſhe "will learn the truth without experiencing "a violent grief." Madame d'Orgeval having done ſpeaking, her huſband and the Count, penetrated with tender emotion, were ſome minutes without being able to anſwer her. They then combated her deſign by ſeveral objections, all which Madame d'Orgeval refuted. The ſtrongeſt was founded on the difficulty of obtaining from the ſervants the diſcretion neceſſary for the execution of this project. "Con-"ſider," ſaid Monſieur d'Orgeval, "that "the ſecret muſt be kept for near a year, "and that if ſhe diſcovers it during the "time ſhe is ſuckling, ſhe will experience

"a revo-

" a revolution as dangerous for her as for
" the child."—" I admit it," rejoined Ma-
dame d'Orgeval; " but conſider too that
" the ſervants will certainly hold their
" tongues when they know that their
" ſilence will be well rewarded, and that
" the ſmalleſt indiſcretion would occaſion
" their diſmiſſion. Beſides, we will ſettle
" matters ſo as never to leave Madame
" d'Erneville alone for a minute; one of
" us three will always be with her, although
" we are aſſured of the prudence and at-
" tachment of her waiting-women. In
" ſhort, we will ſcarcely receive any viſits,
" all our acquaintances ſhall be appriſed,
" no one living ſhall enter the caſtle with-
" out ſpeaking to one of us before ſhe is
" ſeen; ſhe has no correſpondence but
" with two or three relations to whom we
" will write without delay; as ſhe has no
" ſecrets for us, no letter ſhall be delivered
" to her without having been previouſly
" examined or read by us: ſo nothing in

" the

" the world is more eaſy, in the execution,
" than this project, which appears ſtrange
" only becauſe it is new."

Madame d'Orgeval joined to theſe arguments ſuch warm and urgent entreaties that the two huſbands at laſt conſented to what ſhe wiſhed with ſo much ardour. They ſolemnly promiſed her to adopt entirely the plan which ſhe had juſt deſcribed, and they were faithful to this engagement. Madame d'Orgeval was brought to bed the next day of a boy, whoſe ſtrength and floridneſs promiſed the moſt brilliant health. His mother on receiving him on her boſom, bathed him with tears. " O!
" my child," ſaid ſhe, " I have devoted
" you to friendſhip; but you will be dearer
" to me on that account; you will one
" day know that if I have not diſcharged
" the ſweeteſt duty of a mother, it was
" not a culpable neglect, but a virtuous
" ſacrifice. Firſt pledge of love as you
" are, become too the moſt affecting tie
" of

"of ſacred friendſhip." In pronouncing theſe words, Madame d'Orgeval delivered her child into the arms of the Count, who, melting into tears, received on his knees this precious truſt. He carried the child to his wife, who experienced, on ſeeing it, all the tranſports of a happy mother. She was at the ſame time informed that her friend was juſt brought to bed. A few days after, Madame d'Orgeval herſelf wrote to her to tell her that ſhe could not ſuckle her child; but that ſhe was perfectly well. Afterwards, under different pretexts, the interview of the two friends was delayed for ten or twelve days, and it was announced to the Counteſs that Madame d'Orgeval was ill. This news marred all the happineſs that ſhe enjoyed; but the next day Madame d'Orgeval begged her to come to her apartment, with her child; and the Counteſs, full of emotion and tenderneſs, immediately went thither. Madame d'Orgeval, on her entering the room,

room, flew to meet her, and received at once in her arms her ſon and her friend. ..... After a few moments ſilence, Madame d'Orgeval, drying up her tears, took the child on her knees, and turning towards her friend who was ſtill weeping: "I aſk of you, for me," ſaid ſhe to her, "the courage that I have for myſelf. I "wiſhed to announce to you my misfor- "tune, certain of being conſoled for it by "the happineſs which you enjoy. ..... "I no longer have but one child, and it "is yours!" At theſe words the Counteſs, ready to faint, dropped her head on her friend's boſom, and could anſwer her only by groans and ſobs; but Madame d'Orgeval reſuming the converſation, ſhewed her ſo much fortitude and ſenſibility, that ſhe ſucceeded in calming her. "Let us "never ſpeak of this cruel event," ſaid ſhe to her; "I am ſtill a mother, ſince "heaven preſerves this child; I am not "to be pitied ſince my friend is happy,

"and

"and I dare believe, that in my place "ſhe would think thus :—" I will," continued ſhe, " communicate to you a pro-"ject formed by my affection. I cannot "conſole myſelf entirely, but by ſharing "the maternal attentions which you de-"vote to your ſon. Let it not be a mer-"cenary woman that ſeconds you in this "affecting employment; grant me her "place. I cannot be the nurſe of that "beloved child; let me at leaſt be his "rocker, and let him go out of your arms "only to paſs into mine." It is eaſy to conceive the effect ſuch a ſpeech muſt produce on the heart of the Counteſs; for ſhe was ignorant how natural, at bottom, was the ſentiment that inſpired it. Penetrated by gratitude, and warmly preſſed to accept theſe generous offers, ſhe conſented to every thing. That very evening the rocker was diſmiſſed, Madame d'Orgeval ſupplied her place, and it may well be imagined that never had the ſort

of

of employment, which ſhe undertook, been filled with ſo much zeal.

In the meantime, the child viſibly growing handſomer and ſtronger, the Counteſs at the end of a few months perceived, with rapture, that he reſembled, in a ſtriking manner, Madame d'Orgeval; ſhe thought it natural, that having conſtantly been ſo taken up with her friend, her child ſhould have her features. She loved him the more on that account; the affection which ſhe had for this child increaſing daily, ſoon became a real paſſion, and her friendſhip for Madame d'Orgeval augmented in proportion to this attachment; ſo that theſe two ſentiments were blended in her heart, and filled it entirely. Madame d'Orgeval ſlept in her friend's chamber during all the time that the child was at the breaſt. The cradle was placed between the beds of the two mothers; this child ſuckled by the one, dreſſed, undreſſed, attended by the other, and equally

careſſed

careſſed by both, ſhared between them, from his earlieſt infancy, his growing affections; and by turns ſnatched from the inſtinct of Nature and reſtored to it, he could neither diſtinguiſh nor miſtake his mother. He was weaned at the expiration of ten months. Six weeks after, Madame d'Orgeval at length reſolved to reveal to the Counteſs the ſecret which, till this period, had been concealed from her with ſo much caution. One day when they were alone with their child, Madame d'Orgeval, after many preparatives, declared the whole truth. The ſhock and the ſurpriſe, for ſome moments, rendered the Counteſs immoveable. ..... Then ſhe mournfully exclaimed: "What! this "child does not belong to me! and I have "loſt mine!"..... "But," continued ſhe, "what a ſublime ſacrifice you have "made me!"—"Yes," rejoined Madame d'Orgeval, "I could not enjoy a hap-"pineſs of which heaven deprived you; "I wiſhed

"I wiſhed to reſtore to you what it had "juſt ſnatched from you, I beſtowed on "you the moſt affecting right of a mother; "and in giving it up to my friend, I did "not think I loſt it. And you, will you "have leſs feeling, and will that child be "leſs dear to you becauſe he received "life in my womb?"—"No, no!" interrupted the Counteſs, melting into tears: "No, my generous friend, your ſon ſhall "always be the object of my moſt tender "affection. What adoption was ever more "ſacred! Ah! I will diſcharge all thoſe "ſweet obligations which it impoſes on "me; I ſwear it by gratitude, and by "friendſhip, the virtues and the paſſions "of my heart." In fact, from that day, the Counteſs's affection for this child appeared ſtill to be increaſed. He had not gone through all the ceremonies of baptiſm, which became the occaſion of a very affecting entertainment. The Counteſs was his godmother; ſhe held him

him under the baptiſmal font with her huſband; and he was called *Albert* after the Counteſs, who is named *Albertine*.

Fourteen months after the birth of Albert, Madame d'Orgeval was brought to bed of a ſecond ſon, which, in every reſpect, occaſioned the Counteſs the moſt lively joy. She then conjured her friend to let her bring up Albert, ſince ſhe had another child. This requeſt was granted; and young Albert remained at Erneville caſtle. He loved not his parents the leſs, the Counteſs taking the greateſt pains to inſpire him with the moſt tender affection for them. As ſoon as he knew how to write a little, he wrote every day to his father and mother, without ever miſſing, when he was not with them; but his abſence was ſhort and rare, the two families being almoſt always united either at Gilly or at Erneville; and Monſieur d'Orgeval's office obliging him to ſtay frequently at

Dijon, they paſſed there, regularly, two or three months every winter.

Albert was the delight of his two mothers, who were equally fond of him. He diſplayed as much genius and memory as he did ſenſibility. The Counteſs, a moſt accompliſhed and well-informed woman, ſupplied the place of all the maſters that are not to be met with in the country. She procured him a preceptor to teach him Latin and geometry; but, in other reſpects, ſhe was his ſole governeſs. Albert was indebted to his adoptive mother for virtuous principles, charming acquirements, and diſtinguiſhed manners; but he is indebted only to Nature for what education cannot give, a profoundly feeling and grateful mind, and the moſt manly and moſt generous diſpoſition.

Albert was in his eighth year when the Counteſs again became pregnant. She ardently wiſhed to have a daughter in the hope

hope of one day uniting her to her adopted ſon. The fear that this wiſh would not be granted, troubled her during all her pregnancy; independently of the chagrin of renouncing ſo favourite a project, ſhe conſidered a boy only as Albert's rival, of whom Madame d'Orgeval might be jealous; but the event, by diſpelling theſe alarms, crowned her felicity and that of her friend. Albert, accuſtomed to ſhare the wiſhes of his two mothers, although he was ignorant of their intentions, alſo offered up vows that heaven might give him *a ſiſter*; "for," added he, "I have "a brother, and nothing would be want-"ing to my happineſs if I had a little "ſiſter; I would teach her all that I know, "and ſhe would love me one day almoſt "as much as I love mamma."

Albert, who could not work at the baby-linen of the child that was to be born, conceived, of his own accord, the idea of making its cradle; and, directed

by the baſket-maker of the village, he made it in wicker, with as much ſkill as application. Thus, even before my birth, I engaged his thoughts. Sweet preſage of the affection that was to unite us, and of the happineſs we were deſtined to enjoy! I was born on the firſt of May 17**. When Albert learnt that he had a little ſiſter, his emotion and joy were ſo lively that he turned pale, fell a trembling, and was obliged to ſit down. Afterwards he ran to bring his cradle, and he clang to the door of my mother's room till the moment when he was permitted to enter. Then, dragging with him the cradle, he aſked for me; I was brought, and laid in the cradle; Albert went down on his knees near me; he contemplated me with delight; he laviſhed on me the ſweeteſt careſſes. Already my guardian and my protector, he dropped my curtain when I ſlept, and prevented any noiſe from being made; if I cried out, he was affected, and endeavoured

voured to pacify me. Thus he paſſed whole days. Under ſuch happy auſpices was I born; the firſt day of my life would have preſented the affecting and delightful image of all thoſe which have followed it, could I have been ſenſible of my felicity; all thoſe I cheriſh thought of me; ..... I was beloved by all thoſe I love.

The two friends agreed that their project of an union between Albert and me ſhould remain ſecret till I had attained my fifteenth year; that till then, we ſhould, be brought up as brother and ſiſter, and that there ſhould never be mentioned a word that could lead us to ſuſpect the deſign and the hope which had been conceived, in reſpect to us, by friendſhip and maternal affection. Madame d'Orgeval was my godmother, and I received the name of Pauline, which was hers.

During my earlieſt infancy, Albert's ſole recreations were to play with me.

He conſecrated to me the hollow tree of the little wood; he clothed the inſide of it with moſs; he made near it the turf ſeat that is ſtill to be ſeen. On this ſeat my mother reſted herſelf; while I, laid in the hollow of the tree, paſſed there whole hours, and often in the lap of Albert, who ſtole in there with me. This old oak was chriſtened, by Albert, *Pauline's tree.* When I began to think and diſtinguiſh, I conceived ſuch a liking for Albert that I did not willingly conſent to quit his arms, but to go into thoſe of my mother. I could as yet only articulate the names of my father and mother, when Albert, by dint of patience, and of repeating it to me, taught me this phraſe, the firſt that I pronounced: "*I love Albert!*" It was he too who taught me to read, to write, to ſum, and to draw. No infancy was more happy than mine; I never learnt a leſſon without pleaſure; they were all given me by my mother or by Albert:

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If I committed any fault, he had always the double taſk to make me ſenſible of it, to inſpire me with the wiſh to repair it, and to excuſe it to my mother. If he found me abſent in my ſtudies, he ſaid to me: "Our dear mother will think that "I teach you ill; ſhe will provide for you "another maſter;" then I reſumed the greateſt application. He never flattered me; he accuſtomed me to hear truth. Finding it always in him, I loved it before I knew how to appreciate it. In ſhort, I cheriſhed him as the moſt affectionate of brothers, and I reſpected him as a tutor and a friend, whoſe virtues and knowledge were infinitely ſuperior to mine. Sweet ſentiments born with me, which reaſon cannot but have ſtrengthened ſince! I was in my eighth year, and Albert was fifteen, when he caught the ſmall pox. From the firſt appearance of the ſymptoms of this diſorder, we were ſeparated; this was the firſt real vexation that I ex-

perienced. I wept bitterly, repeating that I would have the ſmall pox too, becauſe I would not be *three* weeks without ſeeing my brother. A very able phyſician belonging to Dijon who attended Albert, found his pock ſo mild and of ſo good a quality, that he adviſed my parents to take advantage of this fortunate circumſtance in order to have me inoculated. My father and mother conſented; and when it was propoſed to me, I exclaimed that I ſhould be delighted to have *Albert's complaint*. My mother, who knew Albert's ſenſibility, concealed from him this reſolution till the twelfth day of my illneſs. Then, as we were in full convaleſcence, ſhe was obliged to communicate it to him, becauſe I was inceſſantly aſking for him; and, on the ſeventh day of my inoculation, it was apprehended that the uneaſineſs which I betrayed would be hurtful to me. Albert, on learning this news, trembled and melted into tears. "Great God!" exclaimed

exclaimed he, "the venom that has paſſed "into her blood comes from me!... And "this venom may occaſion her death!" ..... This idea ſtruck him ſo forcibly that nothing could drive it from his mind; however, he dried up his tears, and came immediately into my room. As ſoon as I perceived him, I held out my hand to him and wept. I already had a fever: he knelt down by my bed-ſide; he took one of my hands, and ſaid only: "*Hea-*"*ven! how burning hot ſhe is!*" He paſſed the three following days near me, without quitting me a moment, either night or day; he abſolutely inſiſted on ſleeping on a ſopha in my room; but getting up every minute, as well as my mother, he was continually at the head of my bed. I was very ill for four and twenty hours; I was delirious and had convulſions; I had a great many puſtules on my face, and all theſe accidents made ſuch an impreſſion on Albert, that the

phyſician, caſting his eyes on him by chance, was terrified at the change in his face. He wiſhed to feel his pulſe, Albert warmly oppoſed him; but my mother ordering him to give his arm, he held it out, ſaying: "Well, Sir, I have had a "fever theſe three days." ..... "And "a moſt violent fever," rejoined the phyſician. This declaration completed the fears and the grief of my mother, and of Madame d'Orgeval, who, as it may well be ſuppoſed, had for a fortnight paſt taken up her abode at Erneville. They inſiſted on Albert's going to bed; but he repreſented that far from me, in the ſtate I was in, he ſhould go mad, and ſhould ſink under the weight of his anxiety. He remained till the next day; I then came to my ſenſes; all unfavourable ſymptoms ceaſed; and Albert, perfectly free from alarm, conſented to go to his bed; but he was ſo weak and ſo overcome, that, in leaving my room, he fainted. He

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was obliged to be carried into his own apartment; he had a ſort of burning fever with a frightful delirium, during which he conſtantly exclaimed: "*I will die! I have* "*killed my ſiſter! I have killed Pauline!*" For four days he was in very great danger. At length heaven reſtored him to life and to happineſs; as ſoon as he was able to ſtand on his legs, he flew to me, he was moved on ſeeing my face red and ſwelled. "You find me very ugly?" ſaid I to him.—"Ah, Pauline!" anſwered he, "don't fret at that; for, if you re- "main ſo, I ſhall not love you the leſs, "and your face, being leſs handſome, will "pleaſe me the more!"

A year after this intereſting period of my life, Madame d'Orgeval ſuddenly fell ill of a pleuriſy..... Her huſband being abſent, ſhe did not call in advice, or ſend for my mother till the fourth day of her illneſs. My mother and Albert went to Gilly, and found Madame d'Orgeval

dying. In this ſituation, ſhe thought of nothing but her inconſolable friend; ſhe requeſted her to live for her ſon and for me; her laſt words expreſſed the regret of not having it in her power to witneſs the union of *Albert and Pauline*, and the wiſh that this marriage ſhould be realized. Thus died, at thirty-eight years of age, this heroine of friendſhip! Her career was ſhort, but not unprofitably employed; virtue, ſentiments the moſt warm, and the moſt pure, embelliſhed every moment of it; no reverſe troubled its peaceful and fortunate courſe; her moſt tender inclinations conſtantly accorded with her duties; ſhe loved, and was beloved with exceſs, without inconſtancy, and without weakneſs: happy in her affections, becauſe ſhe was ſo in her choice, ſhe experienced neither the deſertion nor the villany of ingratitude, nor the attacks of calumny; in ſhort, ſhe died in her quiet and flouriſhing country, and her laſt looks were fixed

fixed on a faithful friend, and on two beloved ſons, worthy of her maternal affection.

The deſpair of my mother was ſo violent that it gave long and cruel alarms for her life. In order to remove her for ſome time from the ſpot where every thing retraced to her a heart-rending image, my father propoſed to make a journey to Paris, in order to complete there Albert's education. We ſet out in the month of September 17**, and remained eighteen months in Paris.

LETTER XXVIII.

From the COUNTESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Dijon, Sept. 3.

PAULINE writes letters ſo immoderately long to her huſband, and ſhe has drawn for herſelf a plan of occupations ſo extenſive and ſo regular, that we have ſcarcely time to chat, although we paſs all our days together. She either reads, or begs me to make her repeat ſome verſes, to make her read Engliſh and Italian, or ſhe writes, or elſe ſhe diverts herſelf with muſic. All her hours of ſtudy are fixed as in the time of her education; ſhe thus leads me back to the happieſt days of my life; but we are in want of a *maſter*, who knew better than I the art of giving a charm to leſſons!....

However,

However, it is for him that we work with ſo much ardour. Pauline ſays to me: I am determined that at leaſt, after this long abſence, he ſhall find in me ſome additional talents and improvement. This idea gives her an inconceivable emulation, and makes her patiently endure his abſence. She has reſumed all her ſerenity and her charming evenneſs of temper, and ſhe is in perfect health. She was received here at firſt with a ſort of enthuſiaſm. Every one wiſhed to ſee her; but ſhe has conſtantly denied herſelf all diſſipation, declaring, that ſhe came to Dijon only to ſhare my retirement. I wiſhed, but in vain, to prevail on her to ſee a little company; I am very certain that ſhe is blamed exceedingly for this reſolution, which many people very unjuſtly take for diſdain. I formerly made ſeveral enemies, by ſecluding myſelf from all ſociety, in order to devote my time entirely to the education of my children. It is, no doubt, a misfortune

which may lead to many others, when a woman is ſettled in a town; but it is a trifling inconvenience when ſhe has a fortune, and is determined to paſs all her life on her eſtate.

The Chevalier de Celtas came to Dijon three weeks ago; we were under the neceſſity of receiving him. When my daughter told him that Albert would not return theſe four months, he appeared very much ſurpriſed, "becauſe," ſaid he, "the firſt "preſident of the parliament of Dijon "declared that the buſineſs with which "Albert is charged was to be terminated "in leſs than ſix weeks." This has delighted Pauline; for me, I ſaw malice in it. You know that I have not a good opinion of him, and you think like me; I believe then, that he ſaid this only to make Pauline uneaſy, and to throw into her mind a few ſeeds of jealouſy reſpecting his long ſtay in Paris. But Pauline is abſolutely inacceſſible to miſtruſt; ſhe has even the oppoſite

ſite failing, ſhe is confident to exceſs; and, notwithſtanding her virtues and her perfect purity of mind, if ſhe had lived in the great world, it would have led her to commit imprudences of the moſt dangerous nature. I told her that I was writing to you; and ſhe promiſes to ſacrifice to you, next week, at leaſt two hours of *ſtudy* and *leſſons*.

Adieu, my young and dear friend, love us conſtantly, and rely for ever on the tender affection of the mother and daughter. A thouſand compliments to Monſieur de Vordac. Pauline begs you to remember us to Monſieur du Reſnel, whom ſhe loves and eſteems extremely.

LETTER XXIX.

From the VISCOUNT DE ST. MERAN *to* MONSIEUR DU RESNEL.

Paris, October 4.

MY journey to Barrège, my friend, ſerved me only to diſcharge a duty; I undertook it with hopes which every day grew weaker, and which at length totally vaniſhed. This is the abridged image of the whole journey of life!.....

I have loſt my poor uncle; he died in my arms at Barrège on the 15th of September laſt, after ſuffering cruelly for the ſpace of four months.

I did not arrive in Paris till laſt Monday, and conſequently I am ſcarcely yet *in the way of knowing* all that has happened during my abſence. Among other things, I was told a ſtory which has made a great noiſe,

noiſe, and is no longer talked of, but which cannot be unintereſting to you. It is as follows:

About a month before the court went to Fontainebleau, the Spaniſh ambaſſador, on the occaſion of the birth of the Duke de ***, gave a grand maſked ball: I was then in Normandy at my uncle's. Count de *** was at this ball, with Madame de C***, with whom he is in love. The next morning, on coming from the ball, at break of day, the Count went to the *Champs Elyſées*, and there fought with a man whoſe name was not known for upwards of three months; the Count was ſo ſeverely wounded that, for ſix weeks, his life was thought to be in danger. However, it has ſince been diſcovered that his adverſary was the Marquis d'Erneville. The Count does complete juſtice to his bravery, and even to his generoſity. The particulars of the duel do the Marquis high honour; and indeed, through gratitude, the Count

Count, during his whole illneſs, refuſed to mention his name, and, ſince even, has told it only to two perſons; ſo that this fact is not generally known, or at leaſt has not made a noiſe that can hurt the Marquis. It is aſſerted that Madame de C*** was the cauſe of this duel. I know, however, that the Marquis does not viſit her. Since this adventure he lives in very cloſe retirement, paſſing a great deal of his time at *Fontenay-aux-Roſes*, in a ſmall houſe which he has taken there. He has no intimate acquaintance but with the Chevalier d'Olbreuſe. The latter, whom you do not know at all, is, in my opinion, the moſt amiable man in the world of faſhion. This is not ſaying that he is the moſt witty, the beſt informed, and has the beſt principles; but he poſſeſſes, in a ſupreme degree, every ſocial quality; he is diſcreet, eaſy of acceſs, and mild; as he is far from being tenacious of his opinions, his converſation is always agreeable; he diſcuſſes matters with judgment,

ment, and, always without diſputing; and, when reaſon fails him, he jokes without tartneſs, and with no ſmall degree of grace. He has ſome humour and ſhrewdneſs, with an excellent taſte; fond of pleaſing, he has no excluſive pretenſions; he is delighted at meeting with ſenſible people; but he never attempts to rival them. Captivated and amuſed with the grace of others, as ſoon as he finds they are amiable, he is benevolent for the moment; all this compoſes not a great character, but forms a man really made for living in the world, and for ſucceeding in it univerſally.

The Duke de Roſmond is not fortunate *this year* in his amorous intrigues. He wiſhed, in vain, to debauch the niece of Dercy. The latter has retired to Senlis with this young girl, whom he means to make his wife; he is ridiculouſly jealous of her. However, the Duke found means to ſee her and to write to her; he made an aſſignation with her; and, not doubting of ſucceſs,

ſucceſs, he repaired to the place of appointment on the day fixed, and found no one but the guardian, who was appriſed of every thing by the young girl. Dercy, in triumph, delivered the Duke his love letters, which the prudent ward ſent back to him. This adventure has thrown on the Duke a ſort of ridicule. It was his friend Poligni who told me this ſtory. Poligni, a pupil of the Duke's, and younger than his model, is not as yet quite ſo depraved; he has infinitely more underſtanding than the Duke, and is not, like him, devoid of all ſenſibility: I have a great deſire to *convert* him; but ſuch an undertaking would require talents which I do not poſſeſs.

You aſk me if *I have not fallen in love* ſince I have been in the houſehold of a prince, in which are women who have a great reputation for beauty and perſonal accompliſhments. No, my friend; I have a feeling heart; I have reached the age of

of one and thirty, and I have never been in love. Not but that I have met with women who have appeared to me charming, and at the ſame time eſtimable; yet I ſhall never conceive a paſſion but for an original character; and this is what is not to be found in the world, eſpecially among women. The men leſs watched, more independent, more informed, preſerve better the primitive and greatly diverſified forms of nature, which are almoſt entirely effaced among the women, in a moral as well as in a phyſical ſenſe; for the conſtraint of education and of cuſtoms enſlaves their diſpoſitions, as it compreſſes and disfigures their waiſts and their feet. To know a woman, it is ſufficient to learn what has been her education, in what circle ſhe has lived, and what are her intimate connexions; and how can we paſſionately love the object of whom we cannot, we muſt not judge but from acceſſories, and who is nothing by herſelf? This is the reaſon

reaſon why friendſhip will, I think, ever be my ruling paſſion.

As for the men with whom I am in the habit of living, he who enjoys moſt conſideration is the Marquis de ***. A wrangling and fretful diſpoſition almoſt always gives a man, at court, a reputation for integrity; people there take for virtue the temper which neither admits of praiſe or flattery. There are two ſorts of miſanthropy; the one which proceeds from the hatred of vice, and the other which is excited by envy. Such is the Marquis de ***. Devoured by ambition, the ſucceſſes of others are to him reverſes; he is out of humour with every thing; he criticiſes with bitterneſs all that is done, and particularly thoſe things which are the moſt generally admired; he is reckoned to be generous, becauſe it has been remarked that he ceaſes to ſpeak ill of thoſe whom he has the moſt cenſured, if they fall into contempt or adverſity; but

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it is merely becauſe he envies them no longer.

After the Marquis de ***, the Chevalier de Melcour is the man of *** palace that the prince appears to love the moſt. Melcour has ſome agreeable talents, and a great wiſh to pleaſe; he has read very little, and reflected ſtill leſs; he has no real information, and is not enabled, from his own knowledge, to form a judgment either of men or things. But he ſpent all his youth in a ſociety of men of ſcience and letters, and his memory retains a tolerably good collection of *opinions ready formed*, which, in converſation, he knows how to appropriate to himſelf, and to place with addreſs. The illiterate admire his *erudition*, people of moderate abilities are dazzled by his wit, and enlightened perſons cannot accuſe him of pedantry, and think him ridiculous; for he has grace and fineſſe, and is perfectly maſter of the art of ſhewing himſelf off to advantage, without betraying

the ſmalleſt preſumption. Though deſtitute of principles and ſenſibility, yet he is neither debauched nor depraved; his ſoul, incapable of feeling a violent paſſion, has never been completely ſtruck; and as he has lived only in a virtuous circle, nothing has been able to lead him towards vice. Without imagination and without energy, every thing that is great appears to him gigantic; he will praiſe heroiſm leſs ſincerely than he will ſimple probity; he cannot admire things which have a certain elevation, his diſcernment does not reach to them. Owing to a conſequence of this ſame diſpoſition, he cannot even conceive the wanderings produced by great paſſions; and, in this reſpect, taking his aſtoniſhment for virtue, he enjoys the happineſs of eſteeming himſelf without being juſtified in ſo doing. He has none of thoſe ſtriking vices which diſhonour; but he has almoſt all thoſe which are tolerated, or can, without difficulty, be concealed. More frivolous and

and inconſiderate than wicked, he has but one wiſh, that of ſhining and pleaſing; but one object, that of amuſing himſelf. For the trifling intereſt of his pleaſures or of his vanity, he would always ſacrifice, without any ſcruple, the ſacred obligations of friendſhip, but in an underhand manner, and without any noiſe or rupture. Melcour never quarrels; he neglects, he betrays, he returns, he denies boldly the faults that cannot be proved, he imputes others to his giddineſs; people believe him, or at leaſt they forgive him every thing, becauſe, at bottom, no one loves him enough to inveſtigate carefully his motives and his character. He has nothing that attaches; but he is amiable; he is inſinuating, gay, and artful, and has a manner ſo natural, an air ſo open, that one is never tempted to take his exceſſive complaiſance for ſervility. Friendſhip, gratitude even, will never give him the courage to defend, at the riſk of diſpleaſing, thoſe whom he ought to

love, unleſs the ſlanderers and calumniators are reſtrained by no perſonal conſideration. But if they are impoſing, from their rank, from their reſpect, or merely if they have a good houſe, and Melcour has a wiſh to viſit them, he will preſerve the moſt obſtinate ſilence; at the ſame time you will ſee him ſigh and fret, and it is, in that caſe, joining treachery to cowardice. He who holds his tongue, and appears to grieve when his friend is abuſed, makes a tacit, but formal, avowal of the faults that are imputed to him. If his friends are attacked by ridicule and pleaſantry, Melcour aſſerts, that every thing that does not affect their honour cannot wound; however, for form ſake, he begins by repelling gently the ſmart attacks of raillery, preſently he ſmiles (as if ſpite of himſelf); at laſt he gradually grows animated; laughter gains on him; ..... ſelf-love forgives it him; people accuſe not his heart; they think they have ſeduced

his

his judgment by ingenious ſallies; they do not ſay that Melcour is treacherous and daſtardly; they exclaim; "*How gay!* "*how amiable he is!*" ..... Melcour can by the way diffuſe agreeableneſs in an extenſive circle; but he will always ſow diſcord in an intimate, and conſequently limited ſociety. He will never be guilty of thoſe ill-planned enormities which are always diſcovered; but if two friends ſhould admit him as a third between them, they will, in a very ſhort time, find themſelves grow cool towards each other, and without being able to account for it, without knowing the motive and the cauſe of it. By the magic art of intrigue, Melcour will produce imperceptibly, and by degrees, this great change, ſometimes unintentionally and by dangerous indiſcretions, ſometimes with the project of flattering and pleaſing by little unfaithful reports; ſometimes by a jeſt, or a look a ſmile, always without expoſing himſelf, without the friends having

it in their power to point out or diſcover in him an abſolute falſehood, a poſitive calumny: Melcour, by inſinuating manners, by an exceſſive courteſy, will contrive to render himſelf agreeable, and, in ſome meaſure, neceſſary to both; he will become their confidant, and will act the part of mediator in little quarrels; but clouds will increaſe, reconciliations will every day be leſs affectionate; they will end by not being ſincere; ſpleen, ſpite, and diſcontent will ſucceed inclination and confidence; and the two friends will find themſelves at variance, without knowing how and why they have ceaſed to love each other; and, perhaps, without accuſing Melcour, who will remain the friend of each; while he is at the ſame time ſeparately blaming both. Do you wiſh to know the opinion that people of faſhion entertain of ſuch a perſonage? Here it is: "*Melcour is giddy, indiſcreet, volatile*; "*but he is uncommonly frank*; *his heart*

"*is*

" is excellent at bottom, and he is incapa-
" ble of doing an act of malice."

When we reflect on the opinions of people of faſhion, it is impoſſible to attach any value to their encomiums.

I have anſwered, at great length, all your queſtions, and yet I indulge the hope of paying you a ſhort viſit in a fortnight or three weeks.

Adieu, my friend; I ſay nothing of the pleaſure that I ſhall have in ſeeing you; you know my ſentiments, they are invariable.

LETTER XXX.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to* MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL.

Dijon, October 12.

BELL ***, who is juſt arrived from Paris, has related to us ſome ſtrange ſtories of your brother. As I knew very well, it is, by no means, buſineſs that detains him in Paris; but it is another *ſyren* that enſnares him.

The great Albert is deſperately in love with a ſinger belonging to the *Comédie Italienne* *, and he has fought with a

* A theatre in Paris, which derives its name from the circumſtance of pieces having been *originally* performed there in the *Italian* language; but where operas and comic pieces are *now* performed in *French*. It retains its original appellation in contradiſtinction to the *Comédie Françoiſe*, where no muſical pieces of any ſort are repreſented.—*Tr.*

dancer

dancer of the opera who is his rival. You may rely on the truth of this account; it is perfectly correct. Here then are the fruits of that fine education, ſo highly extolled! ..... It muſt be acknowledged that this incident rather diſfigures the fine romance of *the loves of Albert and Pauline*, for it is nothing leſs than *heroic*. It is very fortunate that your ſiſter-in-law ſet out from here previous to Bel ***'s arrival; for every one ſpeaking of this ſtory, it would have been almoſt impoſſible to conceal it from her. She has left no great regret in this town; ſhe was little approved of here; while Madame d'Orgeval is much beloved. People found in her a coldneſs which amounted even to incivility; ſhe returned no viſit, ſaying, that ſhe devoted all her time to *the ſublime Counteſs*. She was more condeſcending and more kind to the Duke de Roſmond. All this will end ill; at leaſt I fear it.

I ſhall return to Autun in a few days. For theſe laſt eight months I have led ſuch a rambling life, that I have great need of repoſe.

Adieu, my dear fellow; write to me ſometimes; ſend me the news of your neighbourhood; you have a very natural and very captivating manner of telling a ſtory; and be it ſaid, without flattering you, I prefer infinitely your kind of wit to that of your brother, which is made up of nothing but tinſel and far-fetched phraſes. As for diſpoſition and behaviour, I think that Madame d'Orgeval will alſo be of my opinion, and that ſhe finds herſelf very happy to be the wife of a man who has nothing *romantic* about him; but who is polite, amiable, and conſtant.

LETTER XXXI.

From MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL *to the* CHEVALIER DE CELTAS.

Gilly, November 15.

WELL, my dear Chevalier, the *ſyren* of Paris completely prevails over that of Erneville; *the great Albert* aſks for another *reſpite*; he has declared that his *buſineſs* would not be terminated till the month of March. This news arrived only yeſterday. I am ignorant of the effect that it produced on Pauline.

Are you acquainted with one Viſcount de St. Méran, an intimate friend of Du Reſnel? This perſonage, who alſo ſets up for a philoſopher, and makes fine ſpeeches, has been at Gilly this week. He is a long, drooping *lanky*, who moralizes without

mercy, and appears to me inſufferably tireſome. On Saturday Du Reſnel gave a ſplendid gala; Pauline came to it, and there found a Pariſian and a courtier; ſhe was very amiable. The Viſcount was enchanted with her; and I, in my ſnug corner, with my plain, ſimple look, examined all this game, and watched the *ogling*. There was a great deal of it, I aſſure you. But may the devil fetch me if Du Reſnel is not in love like a madman and a fool with Pauline! I think that Vordac is in the ſecret; for I caught ſeveral little words. All this becomes an object of curioſity to obſervers and people who have a little *penetration*.

We ſhall hunt wild boars all the winter, Du Reſnel has had roads cut in the foreſt, which will make the ſport much more agreeable. I have exchanged my handſome one-eyed horſe for a ſorrel poney five years old, that is well worth thirty louis. In this I have not made a fool's bargain.

Poor

Poor Dupui is conſtantly coughing, and breaks very faſt.

Old Vordac will go to the waters of Vichi next ſpring. Whiſt goes on as uſual; Vordac bluſters, Du Reſnel and Deniſe renounce, and I win every game.

Adieu, my dear Chevalier; my compliments to our friends.

LETTER XXXII.

From MADEMOISELLE JACINTHE, *Femme-de-chambre to the* MARCHIONESS, *to* MONSIEUR LE MAIRE, *Valet-de-chambre to the* MARQUIS.

Erneville, February 20.

MY good little friend, we can bear it no longer, my miſtreſs and I. It is dreadful how the time hangs on our hands. My miſtreſs

miſtreſs often cries in private; ſhe is very ſorry that the Marquis won't let us come to him, and I too, long ſo to make a journey to Paris, and above all to ſee you again. I don't doubt your being true; but, for all that, abſence is ſtill very vexing. I muſt tell you that my miſtreſs is ſometimes tempted to go to Paris without leave, the more as the Marquis ha'n't poſitively forbid her; for he ſays only that, as he hopes from day to day come back, ſhe had better wait; but, with all this, we are tired of waiting for a year; and if you will ſecond me, there's nothing more eaſy than to make my miſtreſs ſet out. You have only to write me a letter I can ſhew, in which you will ſay that your maſter will, perhaps, remain another year in Paris; that this frets him very much; but that he does not let my miſtreſs come for fear that it would make the Counteſs angry. Write me this, and you will ſee. When we get to Paris your maſter muſt needs receive

us,

us. What think you? Adieu, my good friend; you need not be jealous; I aſſure you that I don't liſten either to La France or La Pierre, or even to the man-cook. Great Goton is to be married at Eaſter. Françoiſe did a fooliſh thing; when my miſtreſs aſked her who was the father of the child, ſhe anſwered that ſhe did not know *for certain*. My miſtreſs will diſcharge her; but ſhe will provide for her lying-in, and will take care of the child.

Old Laurence cheats and growls more than ever, and Mademoiſelle du Rocher is always as full of her airs. Adieu, my good little friend; anſwer me very ſoon. I am your faithful and ever ſincere friend,

Jacinthe.

LETTER XXXIII.

LE MAIRE'S *Anſwer.*

Paris, February 10.

MY good girl, I approve of your idea, and I ſend you the letter to ſhew to your miſtreſs. You will ſee that I have written in it what you adviſe me; but as for my maſter's melancholy I don't tell a lie; for I aſſure you that he is deviliſh low-ſpirited. Don't loſe any time; the thing muſt be done at once. Bring your miſtreſs to the point: don't ſhill-I ſhall-I: if you manage matters well, we ſhall be ſure to ſucceed.

Adieu, my good girl; your ever devoted

Le Maire.

LETTER.

From the ſame, incloſed in the preceding Letter, and written to be ſhewn to the MARCHIONESS.

MADEMOIESELLE, you aſk me when we ſhall return to the country, and I anſwer you that God in heaven only knows; but I don't think it will be ſooner than a year. My maſter is diſtracted at not ſeeing my lady. He neither ſleeps nor eats, and he is ſo fallen away, that all his waiſtcoats muſt be taken in. He often ſays to me that it is very extraordinary that your miſtreſs don't come; and that he dares not aſk aſk her becauſe it would fret the Counteſs. But the long and the ſhort of the matter is, that my miſtreſs has nobody to ſtudy but my

my maſter; and if this laſts, my maſter will fall ill; in the mean time he is as yellow as a kite's foot.

I beg you, Mademoiſelle, to make my compliments to La France, and to think of me now and then; with which I have the honour to be, Mademoiſelle,

Your ſervant,

Le Maire.

P. S. My maſter has changed his lodgings; if by chance my lady ſhould determine to ſet out for Paris, ſhe muſt come to the *Hôtel des Prouvaires, Rue des Prouvaires.*

LETTER XXXV.

JACINTHE's *Anſwer.*

February 15.

MY good friend, I am quite mad with joy; we ſet off to-morrow. My miſtreſs makes a ſecret of it to *every body*. She leaves here Mademoiſelle du Rocher with little Maurice, becauſe ſhe reckons to be gone but a fortnight. She wiſhes only to ſee and embrace my maſter. She has written to her mother, for we ſhall not go by way of Dijon. Mademoiſelle du Rocher will be fine and mad at not being let into the ſecret. The poſt is going out, that's the reaſon I write to you; but, for all that, I hope we ſhall arrive before this letter. Adieu, my good friend.

LETTER XXXVI.

From MADEMOISELLE DU ROCHER *to* MADAME D'ORGEVAL.

Erneville, February 16.

MADAM, you will be very much ſurpriſed to learn that the Marchioneſs ſet out for Paris this morning, taking with her only La France and Jacinthe. She has left two letters, the one for her mother, the other for the Baroneſs de Vordac, and ſhe deſired me to inform you of her departure. God ſend that this may not be a ſudden freak! I am ſilent; but I own that I am very much concerned. The Marchioneſs did me the honour to tell me that ſhe ſhall return about the end of March; ſhe took with her nothing but a ſmall trunk.

I do

I do not preſume to give advice; yet I think my opinion is full as good as that of Mademoiſelle Jacinthe. I ſay no more.

I am, with reſpect, Madam,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

Roſalie du Rocher.

LETTER XXXVII.

From the MARCHIONESS D'ERNEVILLE *to the* BARONESS DE VORDAC.

Paris, February 20.

I ARRIVED here laſt night, my dear friend. According to Le Maire's note which I mentioned to you, I reckoned to find Albert at the *Hôtel des Prouvaires*; but what think you of his ſetting out yeſterday, with one of his friends, in order to go and paſs a week at a country-ſeat, a hundred miles

from Paris. As it is at a man's houſe that I am not at all acquainted with, I cannot go thither; ſo I ſhall wait for him in this hotel. I had written to him two words on ſetting off from Erneville, to announce to him my arrival. Jacinthe herſelf put the letter in the poſt; but he could not have received it before his departure. He has left Le Maire here, in order to move his things in his abſence; for he has quitted his lodging in the *Rue Traverſière*, and taken up his abode in the hotel where I now am. The apartment I occupy is his, which he has not inhabited; but which is retained in his name, ſo that I found Le Maire, who communicated to me all theſe particulars. I have to-day written a long letter, with which I have entruſted Le Maire, and Albert will receive it to-morrow. Judge how long theſe three or four days of expectation will appear to me. During all this time I ſhall not ſtir out once. Poor Albert! I ſhall find him

altered,

altered, fallen away; what pain that will give me! ..... I myſelf have not been well theſe two days; I had a fever laſt night, which I attribute to the fatigue of the journey, and to the extreme agitation which I experience. It is ten o'clock at night; I am going to bed; I take care of my health; I do not chooſe that Albert ſhould find me look ill.

Adieu, my dear friend; I will write to you again as ſoon as I have ſeen him.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Paris, February 26.

He is not arrived, my dear friend! yet the four days are elapſed, and no tidings of him! I have diſpatched Le Maire to-day with a ſecond letter. What mean this delay and this ſilence? Good God! has he fallen ill!..... or, in returning here, has his carriage broken down? The roads, they ſay, are ſo bad!.... My inquietude and agitation are inexpreſſible..... I have been theſe five days in Paris, and I have not yet ſeen Albert! I am very ſure that he will receive me with as much joy as ſenſibility; but he ought to be here, and

and the forlorn ſituation in which I find myſelf has ſomething terrifying. Heaven! how happy was I on entering Paris, in paſſing the gates, on perceiving this houſe!..... and how melancholy I am to-day! My health is affected by it; I do not get a wink of ſleep; I am really ill..... When Le Maire was here, I queſtioned him, I talked with him about his maſter; now I am alone with Jacinthe, who is mad at not going out, and cries with vexation. I myſelf feel much oppreſſed. I am likewiſe afraid that my mother will very much diſapprove of this journey, and take it unkind of me not to have conſulted her. I own that I well knew ſhe would adviſe me to wait; I wiſhed not to diſobey her, yet I wiſhed to ſet out!..... Albert longed to ſee me, could I heſitate?....

Notwithſtanding the cold, I paſs all the day at the windows that look into the ſtreet, and, when I perceive a carriage

with poſt-horſes, or hear the ſmack of a whip, my heart beats till I am ready to ſink.

Adieu, my friend! I will write to you again after to-morrow, and ſurely then it will be by the ſide of Albert!.....

LETTER XXXVIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Paris, February 28.

GREAT God, my dear friend, what a romantic adventure!..... Ah! what joy it would occaſion me, and how happy ſhould I be, if my Albert were here!.... But no news: uneaſy about him, and cruelly uneaſy, I take no pleaſure in any thing. However, the continual rains have cauſed ſuch inundations, that I flatter myſelf

myſelf this delay is owing only to the bad ſtate of the roads. But for this idea, I ſhould ſink under the exceſs of my inquietude.....

What an event I have to relate to you!..... You know me; liſten; you will eaſily imagine all that I muſt have felt.

Yeſterday I was ſo ill that I kept my bed the whole day; I ſlept five or ſix hours, and finding myſelf pretty well in the evening, I got up at nine o'clock. I ſupped, then Jacinthe went to bed. I remained alone in a ſmall cabinet, and I began to read a volume of Maſſillon, one of my favourite authors. I was ſeated near the fire; I had juſt finiſhed the beautiful diſcourſe, intitled *Du zèle contre les ſcandales*; it was midnight, when I heard a ſlight noiſe behind me. I turned round, and I remarked, with much ſurprize, that a ſmall cloſet in the wainſcot oppoſite the chimney was partly

open. This cloſet, of which I have made no uſe ſince I have been here, has always been ſhut, and I have not even aſked for the key of it. Not being able to conceive how it could poſſibly have opened of itſelf, I approached it, and opened it quite. I then ſaw that the inſide of this receſs had only two ſhelves, which were very wide; on the one, was a very large baſket, ſhut, and covered with blue ſilk, over which was ſpread ſome very fine lace; on the other, appeared to be a ſort of trunk or band-box, concealed by a large veil of muſlin embroidered with gold, and lined with ſilk, which had been placed on it; by this, ſtood in a corner, a ſilver-gilt milk-pot, with a ſmall cup of the ſame metal. I imagined, at the time, that theſe pretty things were preſents deſtined for me by Albert; as the ſhelf on which the embroidered veil was placed, was preciſely at the height of my hand, I lifted up the veil: At that moment, I diſtinctly heard a

ſigh

ſigh and a ſort of groan. I dropped the veil again—I flew towards the chimney—I ſeized hold of the bell-rope—I rang, and I fell back into an arm-chair almoſt in a ſwoon. I could neither ſpeak nor move; but I preſerved all my ſenſes, and I was reflecting, with terror, on the prodigy of the cloſet's opening, and on what I had juſt heard, when Jacinthe arrived; I pointed out to her the cloſet; this was all that I could do: it was impoſſible for me to articulate a word. Jacinthe looked at the cloſet, and not conceiving that this brilliant object could frighten her, ſhe approached it, lifted up the veil, and exclaimed: "*Good God, Madam, it is a* "*child!*" ..... At theſe words, loſing all my fright, I took courage again—I roſe up—I ran to the cloſet—and I ſaw the charming little creature. Ah! my friend, ſhe is an angel of enchanting beauty, and of a ſweetneſs .....! ſhe does not cry at all, and ſhe is pretty .....! ſhe was

in a cradle covered with green ſilk, which we took out of the cloſet, in order to place it near my bed. This dear little girl had round her neck a gold chain with a medallion ſet with diamonds, on which, in gold letters on a ground of blue enamel, was written the name LÉOCADIE. On the other ſide of the medallion, was an R in ſapphires on a gold ground. A note faſtened to the curtain of the cradle mentions that this little girl was born on the 22d of this month, that her name is *Léocadie*, that it is wiſhed ſhe ſhould be fed with milk from the cow, firſt thinned with a little water, and made luke-warm; it is added that ſhe has already taken ſome. This note is concluded by the following lines:

" An unfortunate woman confides to
" you this dear truſt; ah! do not diſap-
" point her hope! ..... In the dead of
" the night, on her knees, near the cra-
" dle of her child, ſhe writes to you with
" a trembling hand..... O! virtuous and
" ſeeling

" feeling Pauline, I am not worthy of
" intereſting you! But this innocent crea-
" ture claims your moſt tender care.
" Providence ſeparates me from her, and
" beſtows her on you; adopt her.....
" I remain alone with my grief; I no
" longer have any purſuit in this world;
" it is all over!..... O! let Léocadie
" be but happy——I will live to enjoy
" her felicity!"

I bathed with my tears this affecting note; I proſtrated myſelf, and I promiſed heaven, from the bottom of my ſoul, to adopt this child! After having made this oath, I looked at my dear Léocadie, I thought her a thouſand times more handſome; ſhe belonged to me, ſhe was my child. I have then a daughter! O! let Heaven preſerve her to me! While I was contemplating Léocadie, Jacinthe was examining the baſket filled with the baby-linen, entirely trimmed with ſumptuous lace, and made in the neateſt man-

ner. On a little ſlip of paper pinned to the baby-linen, we read theſe words: "*The work of her unfortunate mother.*" In ſhort, we even found ſome milk in the ſilver-gilt pot, and it was very uſeful to us; for Léocadie drank of it twice in the courſe of the night.

"Certainly," ſaid Jacinthe to me, "the mother of this child is at leaſt *a* "*Princeſs*; but how has it been poſſible "to open this cloſet, and put there all "theſe things." This reflection reſtored to me all my aſtoniſhment; for the fact was to us inexplicable. The cabinet had but a ſingle door opening into a room from which I had never ſtirred..... We exhauſted ourſelves in vain conjectures; at length, I thought that it was neceſſary to interrogate the landlady. Jacinthe went down ſtairs in order to wake her; it was two o'clock in the morning. The landlady, quite out of humour, got up and came to me: I told her the whole ſtory;

ſtory; ſhe liſtened to me with a jeering air that diſpleaſed me extremely, and looking at *Léocadie* who was aſleep: "This "child," ſaid ſhe, "is as beautiful *as an* "*angel, ſhe is the very picture of my lady.*" This remark made me laugh; for I then ſaw that this woman thought I was really the mother of this charming little girl, and that probably I had juſt brought her into the world. This idea was too abſurd for me to refute it ſeriouſly; I continued my queſtions, and I at laſt learnt that the wonderful cloſet, made, not in a wall, but in a wooden partition, faces, on the other ſide, the top of a ſmall private ſtaircaſe, and thus opens at the back. A young Swediſh lady, who quitted this lodging five weeks ago, after having inhabited it a year, cauſed this cloſet to be made for the convenience of the apartment, which has no other outlet, and "perhaps too," added the landlady (who appears to me a vile woman of a bad

way of thinking,) "in order to favour "ſome intrigue."

From all this, I own to you that I believe the Swediſh lady is the mother of my Léocadie. She may have learned that a young woman, juſt come from the country, lodged in this apartment. She may have aſked queſtions about me. I have greatly careſſed the landlady's little children, who come every day to ſee me; this circumſtance, informing her that I am fond of children, may have determined her to avail herſelf of the facility of expoſing, without being ſeen, the little girl in the cloſet, the ſecret of which ſhe knows. Is not this a probable ſuppoſition? But it is very aſtoniſhing that this foreign woman ſhould know my Chriſtian name. Le Maire muſt probably have mentioned it in the hotel. All this is very extraordinary. The poor mother! how I pity her! to give up her child, to make over to a ſtranger ſuch dear rights! O! what

what a dreadful ſacrifice!..... This child is certainly the fruit of a *faux pas!* ..... The unhappy mother tells me in her note that ſhe is not worthy of intereſting me!..... Affecting humility! Ah! what wanderings are not expiated by miſfortunes and repentance!..... And who could refuſe the warmeſt intereſt and the moſt tender compaſſion to the unfortunate being who laments her weakneſs and thinks it inexcuſable?

But can you conceive my happineſs, my dear friend! This preſent of heaven, this ineſtimable gift, I was worthy of receiving it; who could appreciate it better than I?..... Ah! my God! Albert is not here!..... What a pleaſure I ſhall have in preſenting to him this child, this ſweet treaſure of hope!..... Yet no news of Albert!..... If he does not arrive to-morrow, I know not in truth what I ſhall do, and what will become of me!..... I am ſtill ill; the blood flies

to my head, I ſcarcely ſee what I am writing.

Adieu, my friend, adieu my angel; join henceforth in your prayers to the name of Maurice that of Léocadie.

LETTER XXXIX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

Paris, March 2.

Le Maire came back laſt night; and judge of my ſurpriſe, my dear friend, Albert was no longer at Flavy (that country-ſeat in Picardy). He is ſet out for Burgundy, leaving a note for Le Maire, ordering him to take his trunks to the coach office, and to join him at Erneville, whither he is not going immediately; but where he will be in a fortnight, for which reaſon I myſelf will travel only by ſhort

ſhort ſtages; becauſe, by ſetting out to-morrow, I ſhall ſtill arrive before him, and, in this manner, I ſhall not fatigue myſelf. My health is ſo deranged that I have great need of precaution. But, for my charming Léocadie, I ſhould now repent having made this journey; but it is heaven that conducted me hither, in order to receive this dear little angel. However, Albert is not ill; his buſineſs is terminated; we are on the point of meeting again; I am going to ſee my little Maurice, and my Albert, and I have the prettieſt girl in the world. I am a happy creature! I have preſerved the letter of *the unknown mother*; I have put it in the baſket with the beautiful veil embroidered with gold, the gold chain, the medallion, and ſome choice pieces of the baby-linen, made by maternal hands. I will one day give all theſe things to Léocadie; ſhe will never receive a more affecting and a more valuable preſent. This

child

child is really angelic from her ſweetneſs and her ſurpriſing beauty. She is very ſtrong, and is vaſtly well. I am already paſſionately fond of her. I own that the romantic circumſtances of this adventure contribute to attach me to her. I am ſo touched by the preference ſhewn me by her mother! the letter that ſhe has written to me is ſo intereſting! ..... How I long to know this unfortunate mother! how I ſhould love her! ..... Yet there is one thing that makes me uneaſy; if ſhe ſhould one day take away from me this child! ..... This fear troubles me frequently.

Le Maire was very much ſurpriſed to find me with a little girl. A very ſingular thing is, that he proteſted to me that the landlady told a falſehood in ſaying that ſhe had informed him of the cloſet; he aſked her for the key of it, and ſhe anſwered that ſhe had miſlaid it; but that ſhe would get another made. This

ſeems

ſeems to prove that the landlady is in the ſecret of the child's being expoſed, and this is the reaſon why ſhe was not at all aſtoniſhed when I told her all this ſtory. Then it appears to me certain that the Swediſh lady is mother of the child. I know her name; but I will not mention it. I even beg of you not to ſpeak of my ſuſpicions in this reſpect.

Adieu, my dear friend, I ſhall devote all this day to repoſe, and to-morrow morning I ſhall ſet out at day-break.

LETTER XL.

From the CHEVALIER DE CELTAS *to* MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL.

March 12.

COME back then, my dear fellow; ſtrange things are going on here; but they are infinitely leſs aſtoniſhing to you and me than to many other people.

Your brother arrived on the 9th, not having paſſed through Dijon, and not knowing a word of the Marchioneſs's departure, whom he has neither *ſeen* nor *met*, and who has not written to him. Judge of his ſurpriſe on learning that ſhe had ſet out on the 16th of February for Paris! ..... He queſtioned Mademoiſelle du Rocher, who anſwered with *conſternation*, that ſhe was not in the *ſecret*.

He

He came to Monſieur Dupui's, hoping to find you there. I had arrived there the evening before; I ſpoke to him; he was much altered and much agitated; he could get nothing from me nor from Madame d'Orgeval. He went to the Baron's; and there he learnt that the *virtuous Pauline*, inſtead of going, on her arrival in Paris, to the *Rue Traverſière* to her huſband's, had thought proper to lodge at the *Hôtel des Prouvaires*; and, that there, quite *incog.* and keeping herſelf very ſnug, ſhe had, at the expiration of a very few days found, in a *drawer of a commode*, a very pretty girl newly born, which had cauſed her a ſort of turn in her blood, that obliged her to keep her bed for *eight or nine days*; that afterwards ſhe had proceeded on her route with the charming infant, in order to join her *dearly beloved*; but that, having ſet out too ſoon, the motion of the carriage had occaſioned a *temporary complaint* which requires reſt, and

and that ſhe had ſtopped a few days in a village. In all this, you will eaſily divine the true ſtory; but is there any thing more abſurd than the fable that diſguiſes it? Would you believe that the ingenious Pauline has, in three or four letters, related this pretty romance to Madame de Vordac? The latter was ſo fully ſenſible of the extravagance of it, that ſhe had mentioned it to no one, not even to her huſband: but, at length the Marquis interrogating her in the preſence of the Baron, ſhe was under the neceſſity of ſhewing all theſe letters. On reading them, Albert alternately turned pale and coloured; the Baron fumed, the Baroneſs wept. The Baron declared his opinion reſpecting the *candid Pauline*, in very energetic terms: the proud Albert, notwithſtanding his ſecret conviction, grew angry; he maintained that his wife was *innocent*. The Baron, irritated at his haughtineſs and folly, related that the Duke de Roſmond,

mond, in diſguiſe, had paſſed a fortnight at the *hermitage*; Albert gave him *the lie*. The Baron, furious, kept no bounds, and forbade his wife to ſee Pauline any more; thus the two neighbours ſeparated, irreconcileably at variance. We learnt all this in the evening from the Baron himſelf, whom I went to ſee.

At laſt the *innocent* Pauline arrived yeſterday, holding in her arms the *foundling*.

Tranquille dans le crime et fauſſe avec douceur *.

On alighting from the carriage, ſhe loudly called for the *dearly beloved*. Mademoiſelle du Rocher appeared, and, with a ſolemn air, told her that *the Marquis* was waiting for her in his cabinet. Then, however, ſhe became confuſed, and trembled to ſuch a degree, that ſhe was obliged to be ſupported. At the door of

* Tranquil in guilt and falſe with meekneſs.

the

the cabinet, ſhe gave the child to her confidant Jacinthe; ſhe entered alone; the door of the cabinet was ſhut again; but, at the expiration of a few minutes, the Marquis, with a bewildered air, came out of the cabinet, and called on her waiting-women for help. Pauline had fainted!....

Madame d'Orgeval, although juſtly filled with indignation, thought it incumbent on her to go to Erneville this morning; ſhe made only a ſhort viſit. She learnt theſe particulars from Mademoiſelle duRocher, who, according to the cuſtom of old prudes, manifeſts her opinion only by ſighs, and by *turning up her eyes to heaven.*

Madame d'Orgeval ſaw not the Marquis; he is ſhut up in his cabinet, and does not ſtir out of it. Pauline, lying on a long eaſy chair, received her ſiſter-in-law, who told us that ſhe had found her *ſo pale*, ſo fallen away, that ſhe had raiſed her compaſſion.

Well,

Well, my friend, we know now why Pauline would *neither dance nor ride on horſeback!* .... Do you recollect the periods? this calculation is eaſy to be made. ..... It is preciſely *nine months* after the Duke de Roſmond's viſit that the little girl is found by chance in a drawer..... How will all this end? Will your brother have the meanneſs to forgive and to keep this child?..... What a ſcandal to the province! what a diſhonour to your family! This is the moment to open his eyes and to talk to him with energy. We are all of opinion that you ought to come back without delay, in order to give him the advice of which he ſtands in need.

Madame d'Orgeval, to whom I have juſt ſhewn this letter, wiſhes to rectify an inaccuracy. She ſays that the child was not in a commode; but that it was found in a cloſet, which the Marchioneſs cauſed

to

to open, in turning herſelf round in the middle of the night. Is not this much more probable?

LETTER XLI.

From the BARONESS DE VORDAC *to the* MARCHIONESS.

March 12.

O! my unfortunate and ever dear friend, what muſt I, what can I think, when every thing condems you, when every thing ſeems to accuſe you? My heart is, in vain, incredulous, my reaſon contradicts it!..... So many circumſtances united ſpeak againſt you; yet it is impoſſible for me to believe you culpable..... But how defend you? Monſieur du Reſnel himſelf is ſtaggered..... I ſaw his tears flow..... Oh! who would not weep at the loſs of ſuch a reputation, unleſs he had

had the unfeeling heart of the envious? ..... I would be with you, I would be in your arms, but for the *authority* that withholds and enchains me. Yet I will get this cruel prohibition revoked? Yes, I hope ſo, with the aſſiſtance of Monſieur du Reſnel. What a feeling and virtuous friend!..... I can only write to you privately; he will take charge of our letters. O! my unfortunate Pauline, you will always be dear to me; for you, my heart will never change. Be careful of your health. Monſieur du Reſnel will ſee Albert; every thing may be cleared up or forgotten. Let us preſerve hope, and at leaſt rely on a friendſhip that will never vary.

LETTER XLII.

The MARCHIONESS's *Anſwer.*

March 12.

Hope! I have none.—He *accuſes me!* and you ſuſpect me!..... Ceaſe to write to me; obey the orders that are given you. I relied on eſteem and affection; I will not have pity alone. Adieu; do not bewail the loſs of my reputation; it is, of all the illuſions of life, that which I regret the leaſt, and deſpiſe the moſt!

LETTER XLIII.

From the ſame to the MARQUIS.

March 13.

ASSEMBLED under the ſame roof, we are then reduced to write to each other!....

Is it you, Albert, who have written me this long letter, every word of which is an inſult?..... Is it you who require me to *juſtify myſelf, if poſſible*; and concerning what ſuſpicion? Adultery, hypocriſy, and perfidy, the moſt deliberate and the moſt ſyſtematic!..... You have read my letters to Madame de Vordac; I have nothing more to tell you.

You inform me that you have not received the letter which I wrote to you on ſetting out, that you had not changed your lodgings; that inſtead of having

been at Flavy in Picardy, you were in the country near Paris; that you came thence in order to take away your trunks and your carriage; that then Le Maire aſked you for his diſcharge, and that you left him in Paris. Well, I ſee from this account that Le Maire is an impoſtor, who has been ſuborned to deceive me. Alas! nothing was more eaſy! Have I not till this day always believed that your affection equalled mine? ..... Did I ſuſpect you when, inſtead of returning at the expiration of ſix weeks, you paſſed fourteen months in Paris? ..... And when it was aſſerted that the buſineſs, with which you was charged, might be ſettled in a fortnight? *Every appearance*, it is ſaid, is againſt me. My character, my ſentiments, my whole life then, are reckoned nothing?

You are a magiſtrate; anſwer me, would you, on the ſtrongeſt appearances, venture to condemn the loweſt of mankind?

kind? Undoubtedly not; and you thus condemn your wife, your friend, your ſiſter!..... More rigid towards her than the law would be, you degrade her, even before you have heard her!.....

I arrived here with all the ſerenity of innocence; but it is true that on not ſeeing you run out, a frightful ſurmiſe announced to me my fate. It is true that I appeared trembling before you; I ſaw in your looks, and in your deportment, a ſiniſter expreſſion that chilled me; I looked for you without recognizing you; I felt that all the ties of ſympathy which united us were irrevocably broken, and I fainted. ..... You make this a crime in me; you are in the right. This fainting was not an *involuntary confeſſion*;.... but I ought to have died at that inſtant when I loſt all the errors which attached me to life!....

You aſk me how I can *juſtify* myſelf for having concealed from you, as well as from my mother, the *ſecret enterpriſes*

and diſguiſes of the Duke de Roſmond, and for having prohibited the hermit from mentioning them? I wrote, at the time, theſe particulars to Madame de Vordac. I have aſked her for theſe letters, and I ſend them to you.

You aſſure me that your gratitude, your attachment to my mother, and your friendſhip for me, *which nothing can deſtroy*, make you reject every idea of a *ſeparation*: but you demand of me a *ſincere confeſſion*, in order to be able at leaſt to preſerve for me the fraternal eſteem and affection which you could not renounce *without deſpair*.

Is this a ſnare which you lay for me, Albert? Do you add falſehood to injuſtice? Were you even no more than my brother, could you *love* me and preſerve any *eſteem* for me, if I were guilty as you ſuppoſe? ..... I know it; a ſoul formed for virtue may be led aſtray; yet there are circumſtances which not only aggravate

vate faults; but which render them atrocious; and ſuch is the *confeſſion* that you *expect from my natural candour and frankneſs*. I cover a fault with the maſk of beneficence! Conceal a crime under the appearance of virtue! Join to ſo culpable a wandering the moſt audacious falſehood and the moſt barefaced hypocriſy! Preſent to a huſband the fruit of an adultery! Propoſe to him to adopt it, and have planned and combined for a year this tiſſue of perfidy and impoſture! This is what you think me capable of, and this is what you propoſe to me to confeſs! In renouncing equity, in becoming ungrateful, you have loſt every thing; *yes*, *every thing*, even to your judgment. Can you think that if I had committed all theſe enormities I ſhould have the ſtupidity to acknowledge them and to hope for pardon? ..... Ah! when a woman has deliberately entered upon ſuch a route, ſhe con-

tinues in it without remorſe; and if ſhe could ſtill bluſh, this remnant of ſhame, far from inducing her to denounce herſelf, would produce only new artifices in order to conceal unpardonable crimes.

You require (for the ſake of my honour, you ſay,) the ſacrifice of that child which providence has given me; you promiſe to provide for it; but you inſiſt on my parting from it, and on its being brought up far from my ſight.... You have always ſeen me timid and ſubmiſſive, and reſpect all your wiſhes; I feared you as much as I loved you; but this fear had nothing ſervile; it proceeded from love, gratitude, and admiration; it reſembled that inſpired by the divinity; the veneration is deſtroyed; I am no longer bound but by duty, and the moſt auſtere duty has its limits. I have never taken the liberty to reflect on your deciſions: of what conſequence was it to me to paſs my

my judgment on them? Had they been whimſical, I ſhould have found a pleaſure in following them!.....

I ought always to obey you; but I ſhall uſe the right of repreſentation; my reaſon will, in future, weigh all your orders; and, when they appear to me tyrannical, I ſhall venture to complain of them to yourſelf.

As I am incapable of experiencing a mean and ſhameful fear, at the riſk of confirming you in your injurious ſuſpicions, I will tell you, without any ſubterfuge, that I already paſſionately love the child that you wiſh to take away from me. If your intention be to fill the meaſure of my grief, and to ſnatch from me every conſolation, I have nothing more to ſay, and I ſhall obey; but if you aſk this ſacrifice of me only for my *reputation*, pleaſe to conſider that it is abſolutely uſeleſs; the noiſe is made, and the ſeparation, which you require, would merely prove that you give credit

to the calumny. From reſpect for your adoptive mother, do not yourſelf diſhonour her daughter and your ſiſter! My felicity depended on your ſentiments alone; and my honour ſtill depends only on the opinion that you ſhall publicly manifeſt. Alas! what ſignifies to me that my reputation is tarniſhed to every eye, when you deſpiſe me!..... Ah! cruel! what a heart you have torn, what happineſs you have deſtroyed!..... Albert no longer ſees in Pauline but a perfidious woman, a monſter of hypocriſy!..... How can I endure, without dying, this horrible change!.... Indignation has ſupported me: a too juſt reſentment muſt in theſe firſt moments have ſtifled my ſenſibility. ..... But, great God! who could annihilate it!.....O! you, who conſtituted all my happineſs, can you ſuſpect me without debaſing yourſelf?..... Ah, unhappy man! what have you done!..... Were your eyes to open again, were you to recognize Pauline, you would no longer find

find her! My ſoul was ſo united to yours, that you could not change without changing my exiſtence. You are no longer Albert, and I am no longer Pauline! But you have a character left, and I have nothing left but ſtupid aſtoniſhment and my profound grief. I am no longer any thing. I adopted all your opinions; my inclinations were yours; I judged only with your eyes; this ſympathy deſtroyed, I no longer find in myſelf any thing but a frightful nullity; in ſeparating your heart from mine you rob me of all the faculties which I held from you: in ſhort, you annihilate me!..... Alas! what do I ſay!... Ah! for my eternal misfortune, I have remaining, a feeling heart deeply wounded, and deſponding recollections!.... O! what ſentiment can ſupply the place of that which I felt for you!.... Of what being ſhall I be able to ſay, "He knows me "better than I know myſelf; he alone "inſpires me and divines my thoughts;

"he alone can neither doubt nor ſuſpect "me!".... Dear ſecurity! ſublime and delightful confidence, the greateſt charm of ſacred friendſhip, you are then wreſted from me for ever!..... Is it poſſible, Albert? I ſhall no longer think of you but in lamenting! My affection for you will no longer be any thing but regret! I ſhall no longer open to you my heart! you will no longer be able to read in it! ..... Always near you, always under your eyes, I ſhall be alone!..... I have loſt my brother and my friend; I now have only a miſtruſtful maſter—an ungrateful and barbarous one! I can forgive you! I ſhall ever cheriſh you!.... But my heart is withered, as your injuſtice, notwithſtanding my innocence, degrades me in my own eyes!..... Stripped of your eſteem and confidence, on what can I henceforth pride myſelf? And will the teſtimony of my conſcience ſuffice for my happineſs, when I am deprived of your

approba-

approbation? Alas! I know not! Till now I was innocent, and not virtuous. Till now I have done nothing but for you! ..... No doubt, virtue can alone ſupply the place of ſentiment which you ſnatch from me; I adored it in you and for you; now I muſt then love it only for its own ſake..... Heaven is juſt; you will one day know your error; but what ſhall I gain?—To ſee you bluſh..... Ah! will that be a triumph for her who placed all her happineſs in admiring you, and all her pride in believing you incapable of an act of injuſtice?..... 'Tis all over—Our felicity has vaniſhed like a dream!..... You will no longer be happy!.... Oh! may I have the hope of finding conſolation!....

LETTER XLIV.

The MARQUIS's *Anſwer.*

March 12.

WELL, I believe you. I have read the letters written to Madame de Vordac; they explain every thing; but yours is ſufficient. I believe you as if God himſelf had ſpoken. Pauline, is it yet time? Can you forgive me and love me ſtill?

I will ſeek my excuſe only in your heart and in your generoſity, and not in that unheard-of concourſe of circumſtances which might miſlead any other perſon than myſelf. I will not repeat to you all that has been told me; I wiſh only to juſtify myſelf towards you, reſpecting the faults which I have not, and which you impute

impute to me. Yes, I own it, I ſuſpected Pauline of a weakneſs; but I never imagined that ſhe was become *a monſter of hypocriſy and impoſture.* I thought that ſhe would have recourſe to ſuch artifices only through feeling for a mother whom ſhe reveres and adores. In fact, if the moſt deceitful, but the moſt ſeducing, man had had the power to bewilder, for a moment, your reaſon; anſwer me, Pauline, would you have made this confeſſion to your mother? No; for that would have been plunging a dagger into her boſom; that would have been robbing her of the fruit and the recompenſe of fifteen years' attention and unlimited attachment; that would have been irrevocably depriving her of her happineſs and her pride, the charm of her recollections, the ſweetneſs of her hopes, and the conſolation of her old age. With her, ſuch a ſecret could only eſcape your heart, and not be told; you muſt even have formed the project of concealing it from her for ever; and

then all the ſtratagems, invented to hide your fault, would have been no more than the ingenious precautions of filial affection. In ſhort, if Pauline had a lover, ſhe would be culpable in the eyes of religion and morality; but without being faithleſs and forſworn; and, in this caſe, I ſhould have been ſtill certain that ſhe would have loved her lover a thouſand times leſs than *her brother and her friend.* Yes; the affecting, unchangeable ſentiment that you have for me is preferable to love; but it is not love! You never felt a paſſion for me; and you have not even the idea of the fatal empire of the paſſions!..... You boaſt to me of your ſecurity in regard to my ſentiments; it does honour to your friend; but it would offend a lover. Love, which imperiouſly commands the ſacrifice of duties, expects nothing from eſteem; it depends only on itſelf; and, if it ſees not enthuſiaſm, it takes the alarm and ſuſpects every thing.

So

So then, I have been able to ſuſpect you, for a moment, without calumniating your heart; I thought you leſs perfect without impeaching your ſentiments, which nothing, I know, could poſſibly change. In ceaſing to be the pureſt of all women, you would ſtill be Pauline for Albert; you would always be the moſt affectionate of friends and ſiſters. Theſe bonds, formed from our infancy, are leſs ſacred than thoſe of hymen, but not leſs ſubſtantial: no error, no human weakneſs, can break or unlooſe them! Do you remember, Pauline, that when the pride of birth made your father, all on a ſudden, heſitate to conſent to our union, your firſt movement was to ſay to me: "*At leaſt you will al-*
"*ways be my brother!*" ..... And I, whe I t hought you culpable, likewiſe ſaid to myſelf: "*At leaſt ſhe will always*
"*be my ſiſter!*" ..... Reſume then your ſweet ſerenity; keep your *Léocadie!* If our

laws permitted, I would adopt her legally without a moment's heſitation; for you, I ſhould love to brave public opinion; for we muſt not flatter ourſelves, your reputation is irrevocably loſt. The world judge and can judge only from appearances; and theſe are all againſt you. The loſs of your fame, no doubt, takes away from me all mine. Well! we will be happy in each other: it ſeems to me that you will belong to me more; that you will be more mine. I alone will know you; I alone will do you juſtice; you will find in me only the eſteem that is your due; your heart is formed to be contented with *that*, and mine will be ſatisfied.

Write to me that you forgive me; write to me, Pauline!.... Can I offer myſelf to your ſight unleſs you recall me! ..... Ah, Pauline! can we live without loving each other! and what crime could not be repaired by an affection like ours?

LETTER XLV.

From the MARCHIONESS *to her Mother.*

Erneville, March 15.

O! heart of a mother! true maſter-piece of love!.... You alone, my only friend, could not ſuſpect me for a moment! you alone ſaid from a firſt impulſe, "*Pauline* "*is innocent and pure.*" In regard to you only I have been to blame. I ſet out without telling you, without conſulting you!. It is true that I thought myſelf wiſhed for by Albert, and that I attached no importance to a journey of a fortnight. ..... I ſhewed your letter to Albert, ſaying to him, "Look, Albert, here's "the way to love!" He read it with tender emotion, and returned me, with em-

barraſſ-

barraſſment, this affecting epiſtle. I ſend you a copy of the letter which he wrote to me on the 12th of March, and in which he acknowledges his frightful error. .... You will find, like me, my dear mother, that he excuſes himſelf in a manner more ingenious than ſolid. He is in the right to ſay, that if I had to reproach myſelf with the moſt culpable error I could not have *entruſted* to you ſuch a ſecret. You are more to me than my own conſcience. I conſider no ignominy more overwhelming, nor any crime more horrible, than to bluſh with reaſon before you, and to make you bluſh for your daughter. I ſhould have tried, no doubt, to conceal from you my diſhonour; but I never would have had the impudence and the hypocriſy to cover adultery with the maſk of beneficence. Filial affection would alike have commanded me to be ſilent, and not to deceive you. And with what face ſhould I have received your encomiums on my compaſ-

ſion,

ſion, on my goodneſs? I who, in that caſe, could not have ſupported, without dying with ſhame and remorſe, the credulity of the being the moſt indifferent to me!.... O! my mother! all theſe ideas, all theſe ſentiments are yours! refined ſouls always underſtand and never miſtake each other. The ſage has been deſcribed firm and tranquil in the midſt of the convulſions of the world. Ah! friendſhip is ſtill more immoveable than wiſdom; nothing diſturbs it; nothing affects it; and in all that can impeach its object, it never ſees any thing but coarſe impoſitions and falſe appearances.

Albert!..... O! how he has diſappointed my hope!..... *To live and to love him* are to me two things as inſeparable as to live and to breathe: but I thought his ſoul ſo ſuperior to mine! Ah! I deceived myſelf; I know better how to love!..... Does not real greatneſs conſiſt in ſentiment? ..... It is then true

true, that the perfection of this celeſtial faculty is given only to women!..... For who could ſurpaſs, who could equal Albert! When I am forced to admire him leſs, I deſpiſe all other men. What are they not, ſince the moſt virtuous and the moſt enlightened of them all, the honour and the model of his ſex; ſince Albert, in ſhort, could be ungrateful!.... Albert, unjuſt! Albert, ungrateful!..... Theſe words united ſtill ſeem to me a blaſphemy—but, yet, he thought *Pauline faithleſs and forſworn!* O! frightful, indelible recollection! I have forgiven, and from the bottom of my ſoul; you will not doubt it—but to forget!—Ah! never! ..... What an enchantment deſtroyed! ..... It ſeems to me that I am tranſported into another univerſe, into a new world, where every thing aſtoniſhes, wounds, and afflicts me!..... Alas! I knew nothing! no, nothing but you alone, O! my incomparable friend!..... Of what

what conſequence is it to me to have been miſtaken concerning all that ſurrounded me! but I did not know Albert!.....

We ſhall ſet out for Dijon on the firſt of May; I will bring you my charming little Léocadie: O! how dear ſhe coſts me!... I ſhall love her the more on that account. What ought I not to expect from her, when ſhe knows of what happineſs ſhe has deprived me! She will become for me what I am to you, and I ſhall be indemnified. How delightful it will be to me to ſee her in your arms, and to feel myſelf preſſed with her on your boſom, my only refuge! Ah! I ſhall no longer ſhed there thoſe delicious tears with which it has been ſo frequently bathed! thoſe happy days are paſſed. How bittter are the tears which I now let fall! I ought to conceal them.... He thinks me conſoled. This error is neceſſary to his repoſe; I wiſh him to preſerve it; but, great God! how can he believe

believe that ſo deep a wound is already healed! ..... Thus, then, my heart no longer opens itſelf to him; he alone is to blame; and it is I who am forced to diſſemble! Inſupportable and ſtrange ſituation! I have but one thing to conſole me; it is to recollect all that he has done for me ſince I was born; I retrace to myſelf even the moſt trifling converſation; I oppoſe ſo many proofs of a perfect friendſhip to that momentary injuſtice. I wiſh I could perſuade myſelf that eighteen years' affection, attentions, and favours, muſt efface even the remembrance of a fault ſo quickly acknowledged; and I cannot, when I reflect on the nature of this fault! He has ſaid to himſelf, thinking of me, "*She is "falſe, ſhe is forſworn!*" ..... Ah! dear mother, I am no longer happy; I can no longer be ſo in future, at leaſt perfectly! Monſieur d'Orgeval, his wife, and the Chevalier de Celtas have behaved towards me on this occaſion in a ſhameful manner.

ner. I have had, beſides, ſo painful a ſubject of aſtoniſhment, that this ſcarcely gives me any.

Madame de Vordac, in the beginning of this affair, wrote me a note, which, in the ſtate of mind I was then in, hurt me extremely; yet, although ſhe betrayed in it injurious doubts, ſhe diſplayed friendſhip and her excellent heart. Her huſband will not let her correſpond with a *monſter like me!* We write to each other privately; Monſieur du Reſnel is our confidant, and takes charge of our letters. So then, my reputation is tarniſhed! This idea makes me ſhudder for my mother, but not for my huſband. But, on this point, Albert is perfect; I am certain that he has made up his mind on the ſubject; he has too much greatneſs of ſoul not to deſpiſe public opinion, when it is unjuſt. You will think the ſame, my dear mother; as for me, I ſhould, but for you and for Albert, experience

perience only cold indignation and profound diſdain.

Adieu, my mother, my real friend! O! how much I want to ſee you, and to pour out my ſad heart into yours!

LETTER XLVI.

The COUNTESS's *Anſwer.*

Dijon, March 19.

AT length they have taken off the maſk! I knew it already from Madame de Vordac, who partakes all my reſentment. Ah! how eaſy it is to forget our own enemies; but how not hate the enemies of thoſe we love! ..... This ſentiment, however, is always blameable; we muſt conquer it; religion alone can give us the courage for

ſo

ſo doing. Is it poſſible that Monſieur d'Orgeval can be the ſon of my angelic friend, and the brother of Albert! That a ſoul ſo mean, a being ſo dull and ſo ſhallow, can have imbibed life in the womb of the moſt perfect of women! Ah! I have long known him! He is as full of talk and indiſcretion as he is of envy and malice; he ſaid one day before Madame de B****, that Albert had made himſelf *perfectly ridiculous by aſſuming the title of Marquis d'Erneville.* Madame de B**** anſwered, that when a man poſſeſſed a marquiſate, he might call himſelf *Marquis*; but that, beſides, the late Count d'Erneville would not give his only daughter to *Monſieur d'Orgeval*, but on the expreſs condition that he would for ever relinquiſh his name to take that of d'Erneville, and that it was quite natural that an *adopted ſon* ſhould have yielded to this wiſh, rather than refuſe the daughter of his benefactors,

with whom he was in love, and who was the richeſt match in the province.

The Chevalier de Celtas, the proudeſt, the moſt conceited, and the moſt deceitful of men, has completely corrupted Monſieur d'Orgeval; he has ſubjugated him by flattery the moſt ridiculouſly groſs. I have been told that he was continually praiſing him *for the quickneſs of his underſtanding, and for his penetration!* The penetration of Monſieur d'Orgeval! ..... Your ſiſter-in-law is an ill-bred coquette, as deſtitute of feeling as of graces and genius. If ſhe knew all that is ſaid of her connexion with the Chevalier de Celtas!..... Let us ſpeak no more of theſe odious creatures; I ſhould become ſpiteful if I troubled myſelf about them; this would be reſembling them: I will therefore be ſilent. And you, my dear child, be always mild and moderate; enter into no explanation with them; do not indulge

in any reproach; we ought to make none, except to thoſe whom we eſteem. But have no quarrel; invite them as uſual; retrench only the demonſtrations of friendſhip; be, in other reſpects, conſtantly obliging and polite.

Dear Pauline, ſee what, at your age, are the conſequences of an inconſiderate ſtep! Had you conſulted me, I ſhould have told you that you could not, with propriety, ſet out on the letter of a ſervant, the more eſpecially as this letter contained a falſehood, in aſſerting that I was againſt this journey; when, on the contrary, I had more than once (without mentioning it to you) written to Albert to propoſe to him, if his buſineſs was prolonged for any time, to take you myſelf to Paris, and to remain there with you as long as you ſhould ſtay. You would then have known that you ſhould have miſtruſted Le Maire's note; we would have written together to your huſband, who, by anſwering us that

he was coming back, would have prevented this fatal journey.

All this, in opening your eyes reſpecting treacherous relations, ought not to inſpire you with any miſanthropy. Thoſe who were witneſſes of the Duke de Roſmond's viſit, and who never quitted you, cannot accuſe you without calumniating you. But the perſons who know this ſtrange and romantic ſtory only from exaggerated, and even unfaithful reports, may very well, without malice, think you culpable. It would be better, no doubt, not to believe ill of people except when it is poſitively proved; but this perfect rectitude is not in nature; it is found only in perſons of eminent piety, or in hearts which are devoted to us; and, in this latter caſe, it is leſs a virtue than a ſentiment.

The world are very volatile and very depraved; yet there is always in them a ſort of general equity, which does not render their opinions infallible; but which preſerves

preſerves them always from a wilful act of injuſtice, the only one that is odious. We muſt alſo, admit that we are never univerſally calumniated without having drawn on ourſelves this misfortune, if not by a culpable fault, at leaſt by an improper ſtep, or by ſome imprudence *. In ſhort, patience and virtue, ſooner or later, triumph over calumny; and, to the honour of providence, this maxim is become trivial, only becauſe it is always juſtified by experience. Forbear then from ſpleen and diſdain. Conſider that the world are unjuſt towards you, only becauſe they are deceived: regret their eſteem; for, corrupt as they are, they honour and reſpect virtue; try to ſet them right, and to bring them back, but without meanneſs. If they treat you ill, if you are no longer received

* Theſe letters were written before the French Revolution; and this remark was then perfectly true. But it would be falſe in times of troubles and factions.

in ſociety, ſhew neither ſpite nor ill-humour; at the ſame time make no advance; join to the mildneſs that ought always to characteriſe a woman, the compoſure and the noble pride that become innocence; do not ſay that you deſpiſe public opinion, modeſty alone ought to render it reſpectable in the eyes of our ſex; to brave it is an indecency, to appear overwhelmed by it is a weakneſs; you could not even ſpeak of it with dignity: be ſilent; endeavour to juſtify yourſelf, not by words, but by your actions; wait with reſignation and courage; and time, or, to ſpeak more correctly, heaven will reveal the truth.

As for your huſband, too much delicacy exaggerates his fault towards you. Men, my dear child, have not our principles. Let us be contented when we are loved in preference to every thing; conſider that this is a very rare lot, and it is yours.

Adieu, my dear child; I expect you with the moſt lively impatience, and the unalterable

unalterable affection which you know I feel.

LETTER XLVII.

From MONSIEUR D'ORGEVAL *to the* CHEVALIER DE CELTAS.

Dijon, May 15.

MY brother and his wife have been here this fortnight, and they live in a *compulſory* retirement that muſt make this town very diſagreeable to them. All the women are leagued againſt my ſiſter-in-law, who has paid ſeveral viſits, not one of which has been returned. Madame de Fonville, who has moſt certainly the beſt houſe in Dijon, declared aloud that ſhe would not even be ſeen in company with her; and as ſhe is my wife's friend, and loads us with proofs of friendſhip, you muſt be

ſenſible how difficult a part I have to act. A man muſt not be quite a fool to extricate himſelf well from ſo tickliſh a ſituation.

The ſublime Counteſs is exaſperated at the attention paid to my wife, who never was ſo courted. We have already paid her two viſits: ſhe invited us to dinner. Deniſe anſwered that *we had previous engagements for a week.* The Counteſs looked at Pauline, and they both coloured. Upon my word, it is not without reaſon. Imagine that Pauline has the effrontery to hold conſtantly in her lap *the little female baſtard*; and, under my brother's noſe, ſhe calls it *her child* and *her daughter*. I have deſired Deniſe to avoid appearing in public with her, for the indignation is general. The tables are well turned, my dear Celtas! Who would have ſaid, only a few months ago, that Dupui's *plebeian* niece would bluſh at the alliance of the Count d'Erneville's daughter? I do not

not comprehend Albert, who appears calm and ſatisfied in the midſt of all this. But, with the *noble milk* of the *ſublime Counteſs*, he has imbibed the art of diſſimulation. For me, I had not, for my *nurſe*, the daughter-in-law of a man decorated with a blue ribband *; I was, quite in a plain way, ſuckled by my mother, who was neither the daughter nor the wife of a nobleman; but I declare, that if Deniſe conducted herſelf like Pauline, I would have her confined for the remainder of her life.

However, Pauline has reſumed her *embonpoint* and her blooming complexion: as you very juſtly obſerved, ſhe has no more remorſe than modeſty. The long ſtay that Albert made in Paris obliges him to paſs here at leaſt three or four months; and I ſhall alſo remain all this time. Come and ſee us, my dear Celtas; we will ſpend together ſome delightful evenings at Ma-

* A Knight of the Order of the Holy Ghoſt.

dame de Fonville's, who has a great friendſhip for you. Dijon is very brilliant this year, and we have never been ſo much amuſed.

Deniſe told me in confidence, that the *little female baſtard*, who is really as beautiful as an angel, is already as like the Duke de Roſmond as one pea is like another; and Bel ***, who knows the Duke, and who met the little girl walking, alſo declares that the reſemblance is ſtriking.

LETTER XLVIII.

From MONSIEUR DU RESNEL *to the* VISCOUNT DE ST. MÉRAN.

Dijon, June 6.

You will be ſurpriſed, my dear Viſcount, to receive from me, a letter dated from Dijon. I have been in this town a fortnight, and I ſhall not return to Gilly till the month of September. I will tell you the real motives of this journey. I have already informed you of the ſtrange events that have diſturbed the happineſs of the engaging Pauline, whom you admired ſo much laſt year at my houſe.

I have not concealed from you that, at firſt, I was ſtaggered by the recital of ſo extraordinary an adventure, and I thought Pauline guilty. But ſince, I have been

better informed of the particulars; I have recollected the circumſtances of her conduct, I have read all her correſpondence with Madame de Voidac; in ſhort, I have heard her herſelf, and there does not remain in my mind the ſhadow of a doubt or ſuſpicion. I know to what a degree women can carry cunning and artifice; I recollect very well that formerly I was completely the dupe of a hypocrite; but, nevertheleſs, the confidence I had in Madame du Reſnel was by no means to be compared to that with which Pauline inſpires me. I was then deceived by ſpecious facts, by an impoſing conduct, and by the falſe conſequences that I thence drew; I had a conviction that aroſe from reaſoning; that which I at this day experience is from ſentiment; and when ſentiment proceeds not from paſſion, it never deceives refined ſouls. There is, in innocence and truth, a ſomething ſtriking which we can neither define, deſcribe, nor miſtake,

take, when we are impartial obſervers and judges. Far from Madame du Reſnel having ever deceived me by the imitation of the tone and air of candour, I remember that, when I began to ſuſpect her, I at once recollected that, on a thouſand occaſions, I had remarked in her equivocal looks which had ſurpriſed me without ſtriking me at the moment, and the recollection of which, at a future period, ſtrengthened all my ſuſpicions; and when I retrace to myſelf the ingenuous, the modeſt, and ſweet countenance of Pauline, this image alone appears to me a juſtification. Beſides, for theſe two years that I have been acquainted with her, and have ſtudied her as the moſt amiable and the moſt intereſting object that I have ever ſeen, what I have particularly admired in her is, her perfect ſincerity. When I liſten to her, I find ſuch a harmony in the expreſſion of her face, in her looks, in the affecting ſound of her voice and in her converſ-

converſation, that it is almoſt impoſſible for me to doubt the purity of her mind.

Let us return to my journey to Dijon. As the Marquis d'Erneville and his wife are to ſtay here four or five months, I had the greateſt wiſh to come hither, not only to paſs my time agreeably with them, but in the hope of being uſeful to them. Their vile enviers have not let ſlip ſuch a fine opportunity of calumniating them with ſome probability, and I wiſhed to be at Dijon to diſappoint them as much as poſſible; this is not very difficult when a man is rich, and gives dinners and ſuppers. The Marquis has a very large eſtabliſhment at Erneville; but he has never had a houſe at Dijon; and, although he paſſes here this year more time than uſual, he very properly wiſhes not to do any thing extraordinary. He is received as he has always been; he enjoys a perſonal conſideration of which nothing can deprive him; but there is a moſt violent clamour againſt

his

his wife. Yet, in defaming her, people ſtill treat her with infinite reſpect; ſhe receives a great many invitations; ſhe accepts few, and ſhe devotes almoſt all her time to her mother: the Marquis, on his part, ſees little company, and conducts himſelf with dignity, and in a becoming manner in every particular. He has really a noble mind, and a great character. To ſerve friends who are ſo dear to me, I employ neither *eloquence* nor reaſoning; but I am arrived here with an excellent cook, a great many horſes, and three or four carriages. It was neceſſary that I ſhould have a pretext for quitting Gilly; I found one in a ſtrange law-ſuit that has been begun againſt me by the inhabitants of a village. I am come to plead my own cauſe at Dijon; and I will protract it till the month of September. Through a very natural delicacy, I maintained to the Marquis and to Pauline that I came only on account of my law-ſuit; and I added,

with

with truth, that the deſire of being perſonally acquainted with the Counteſs d'Erneville was alſo one of the motives of my journey. This intereſting and reſpectable woman received me like a ſincere friend of her children; and, moſt aſſuredly, under this title, I deſerve the kindneſs that ſhe ſhews me. Although ſhe never goes out of her convent, ſhe came to dine with me. I had invited, beſides her children, only ſix perſons, but very ſelect, and of the moſt conſequence in the town. I never ſaw Pauline ſo amiable as ſhe was on that day. My gueſts were enraptured with her, and from that moment are become her moſt ardent defenders. I had fixed on a day when I knew that Monſieur and Madame d'Orgeval were engaged elſewhere; they were enraged at all they heard of this dinner; deſpicable and vile creatures!..... I have already ſucceſſively entertained at my table all the firſt company in Dijon, with the exception of one Madame de Fonville,

Fonville, whom I have not invited. She is a rich widow of five and thirty, tolerably handſome ſtill; but cold, inſipid, very much taken up with her perſon, yet a prude; and who wiſhes to blend a very aukward coquetry with the conſideration that auſterity gives; pretenſions rarather common, but always unfortunate; for they produce a ſtrange mixture which can neither pleaſe giddy-headed fellows and libertines, nor impoſe on virtuous people. This woman, long ſince envious of the real merit of the Counteſs d'Erneville, and of the charms of the Marchioneſs, is very intimate with Celtas, and the d'Orgevals. She has inveighed moſt bitterly againſt Pauline; and this is the reaſon why I did not chooſe to get myſelf introduced at her houſe, and draw her to mine: I have publicly declared the motive, adding, that my friends deſpiſed ſuch abſurd calumnies, that I myſelf attached no importance to them; but that the authors of

theſe acts of malice inſpired me with the moſt profound indignation. Theſe declarations were reported to Madame de Fonville. She ſees that my houſe takes; that my ſuppers are much the faſhion: ſhe has an earneſt deſire to come and ſee me; and a third perſon of her acquaintance undertook this negociation. She ſent me word that *the real authors* of the calumnies are Monſieur d'Orgeval and his wife: thus, then, are the d'Orgevals already ſacrificed. Judge of their rage. I met Madame de Fonville yeſterday in a houſe; ſhe made me a great many *overtures*; but I was *inflexible*. Next Monday I am to ſup with her at the Firſt Preſident's; I mean to bring her to an authentic reparation, and then I will *relax*. Fear not, my friend, that theſe *brilliant ſucceſſes* can give me a degree of ſelf-conceit. I aſſure you that I attribute nothing of them to myſelf; but I have a houſe really ſumptuous for Dijon; here, people play, dance, and have little

little concerts; I lend my horſes, and I give entertainments: with ſuch manners, a man may ſucceed anywhere; and the more ſo, as I have announced that I ſhould come in future to paſs all my winters at Dijon; and, in conſequence, I have taken for nine years the houſe that I occupy. No one is more ſenſible than myſelf how frivolous and contemptible oſtentation is; but I ſanctify the uſe of it; I employ it only to diſappoint malice, and to ſerve innocence and friendſhip..... O! how I pity the cold and cowardly ſouls who neither know how to ſupport nor defend their oppreſſed friends! Thoſe people who think they have feeling, and who remain inactive when perſons whom they pretend to love ſtand in need of aſſiſtance, ſupport, and protection! For my part, I have courageouſly endured calumny; but I will never patiently bear the injuſtice of which my friend is the object; I will never give him up in his adverſity; as long as he ſuffers,

I will

I will exert myſelf, even were it without any hope of ſucceſs; my activity will ſuſtain his ſtrength; it will conſole him; at leaſt he will be able to ſay to himſelf: "My "ſituation is not deſperate, friendſhip has "not abandoned my cauſe!" Every one feels, every one agrees that nothing is more honourable and more pleaſing than to be able to juſtify a being indifferent to us, but unjuſtly accuſed. What muſt it be then to juſtify a friend? Madame de Vordac has behaved in all this buſineſs in a manner that attaches me to her for life; her huſband, who had fallen out with the Marquis, was dangerouſly ill three weeks ago. Madame de Vordac ſat up with him for five nights. The Baron, grateful for ſo much attention, betrayed a ſenſibility which, I believe, he never before manifeſted. Madame de Vordac availed herſelf of it to aſk permiſſion to ſee her friend again. The Baron granted every thing. I undertook to reconcile him with the Marquis,

Marquis, which is already done, and the Baron and his wife are to come immediately to Dijon. I ſhall accommodate them with apartments in my houſe, and they will remain ſix weeks with us. This is the progreſs we have made.

I know how fond you are of ſuch little details, ſo I am not afraid that theſe will appear to you ill-timed; and I feel that we, a ſecond time, enjoy agreeable events that have intereſted us, when we communicate them to our friend.

Adieu, my dear Viſcount; ſend me the new publications, and ſuch Engliſh ones too, as are worth the trouble of reading. Probably, the amount of the carriage of them will not *make a great hole in my purſe.*

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